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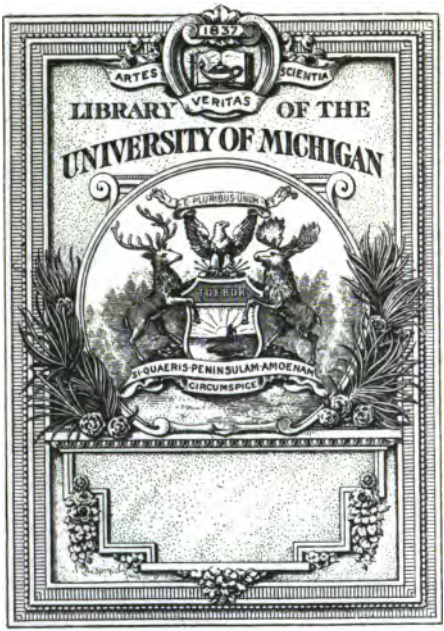
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OBSERVATIONS

ON THE

GREEK and ROMAN

CLASSICS.

IN A

SERIES of LETTERS to a Young NOBLEMAN.

Now publiſhed for the Uſe of Gentlemen at the Univerſity, and thoſe who may have Occaſion to ſpeak in Public.

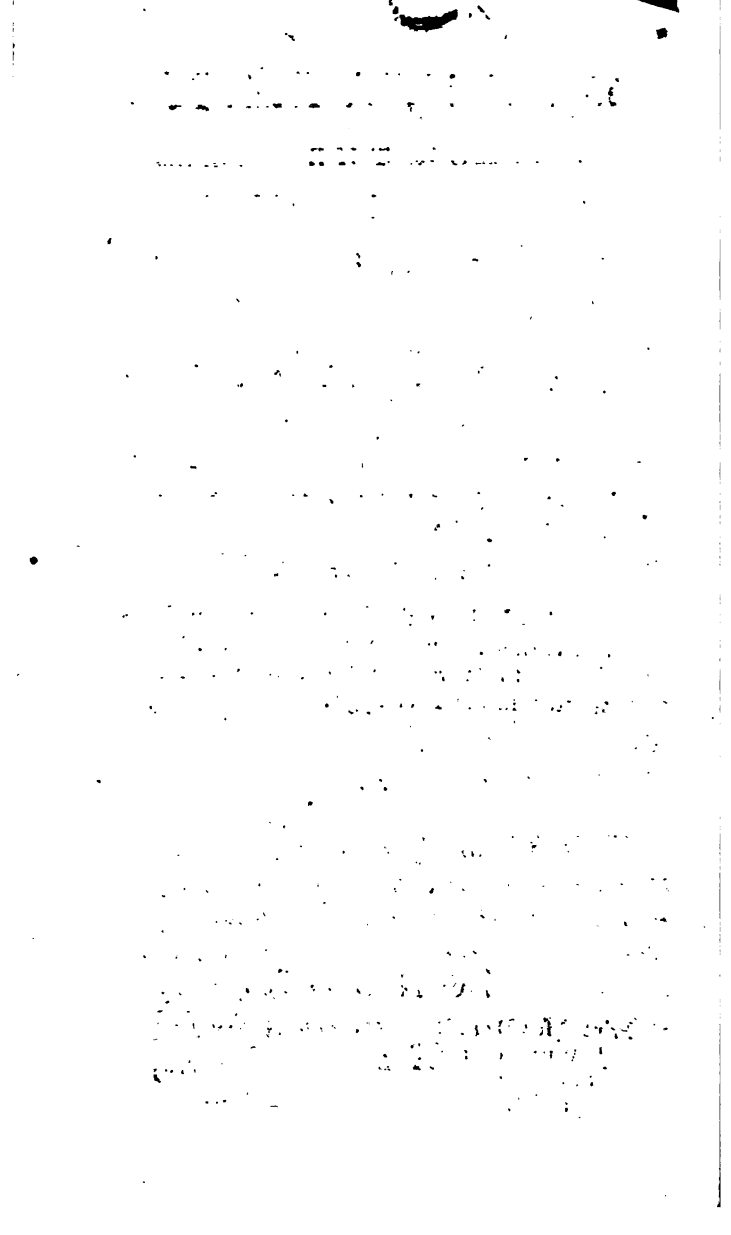
To which are added,

REMARKS on the ITALIAN Language and Writers. In a LETTER from M. *Joſeph Baretti* to an *Engliſh* Gentleman at *Turin*, written in the Year 1751.

LONDON:

Printed for DAN. BROWNE, without Temple-Bar; J. WHISTON and B. WHITE, in Fleet-ſtreet; S. BAKER, in Ruſſel-ſtreet, Covent-Garden; and LOCKYER DAVIS, in Fleet-ſtreet.

MDCCLIII.



THE PREFACE.

IF partiality to the Writer did not, in ſome degree, ſway the opinion of thoſe who thought the OBSERVATIONS *contained in the ſucceeding ſheets worthy the attention of the Noble Youth for whoſe ſervice they were written; it may not be too great a preſumption in their Author to ſuppoſe they may be of uſe alſo to the Public.*

THESE are Judges of that rank in Literature, that unleſs perſonal kindneſs has, on this occaſion, intervened, no other miſapprehenſion could miſlead them. If they are right, the Work will be received, if otherwiſe, the reputation that

may be loſt by it is hardly a ſacrifice too great to ſo honourable a friendſhip.

SUCH as the Opinions and Remarks are, they will be found the Offspring of conſideration, not aſſumed on credit from others; and when they differ from thoſe of ſuch as have written on the ſame ſubject, all the favour he who propoſes them requires, is, that they may not be condemned ſolely for that reaſon. If upon the judging them not by other Critics, but by the paſſages to which they allude in the Author concerning whom they are delivered, they are found idle or weak, let them fall: they are the judgments of one who never wiſhes to ſet his private opinion againſt that of the World: if they are received they will prove that he has weighed more thoroughly, not that he has determined more boldly, than thoſe who went before him.

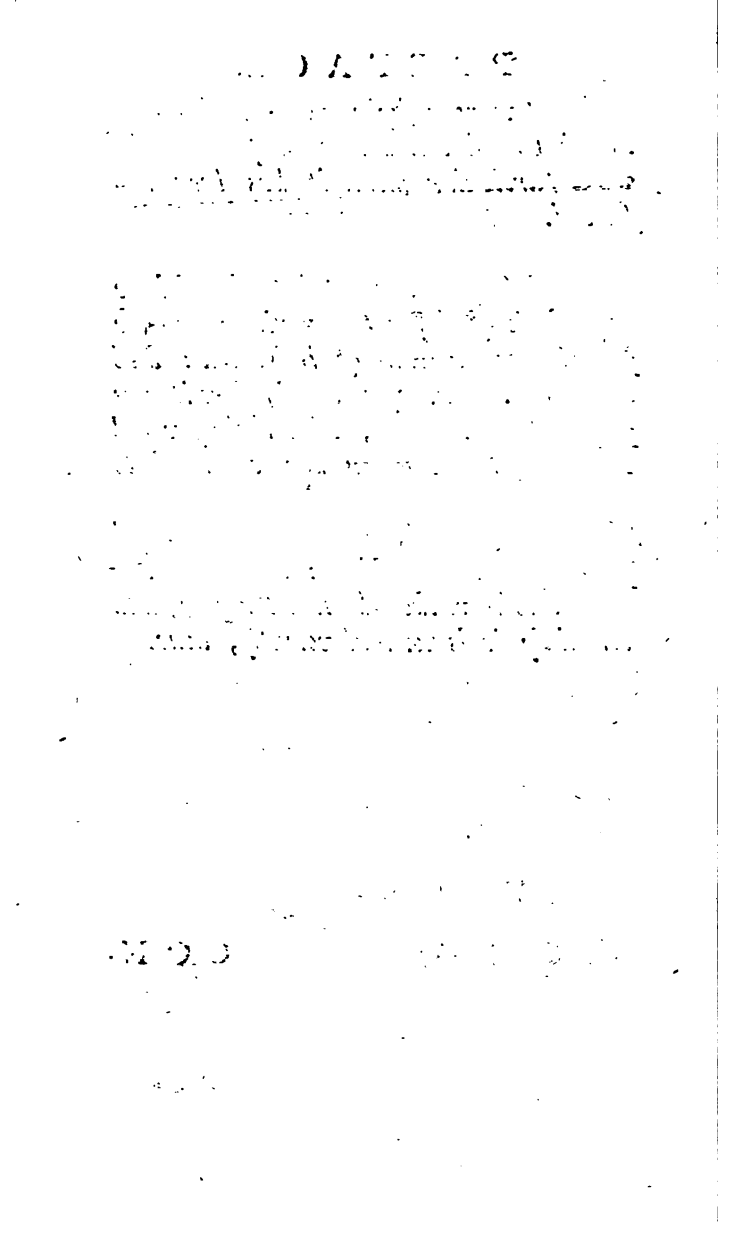
ALL men who ſpeak of Homer *will call him the greateſt of Poets, all who mention* Demoſthenes *will allow him to be the firſt of Orators. But there are*

different

different ways of saying this; and that is useless Praise which does not point out by what particular merit it has been deserved.

THE Classics are not introduced here as subjects of empty panegyric, they are proposed as patterns of imitation: and to render the examples as useful as it was possible to make them, with their several Beauties, the Author has ventured to mark out what he takes to be their faults. This is the boldest, and it is the newest part of the undertaking: but there are those who have thought it not rashly, and certainly it is not malevolently, done.

CON-



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LETTER IV.

OBSERVATIONS

ON THE

GREEK and ROMAN

CLASSICS.

LETTER I.

INTRODUCTION.

THERE cannot, my dear Lord, be a nobler ambition than that which at preſent engroſſes your attention; the deſire of being conſpicuous among the moſt auguſt aſſembly in the world. Perſevere in the attempt, and it cannot be otherwiſe but you muſt ſucceed. Nature has given you every requiſite: much more. She has given you every advantage to which the *Greek* and *Roman*

Orators owed their ſucceſs; and while you continue in the road you have at preſent taken for their cultivation, you will give proſpect to every one, of that which muſt be the event, of nothing leſs than your becoming the rival of all their excellencies.

ELOQUENCE diſplays itſelf with a peculiar grace from a good figure, nor is an agreeable tone of voice a trivial advantage; but underſtanding and knowledge are to be the baſe of all its powers: the firſt of theſe, which is all that can be born with us, your Lordſhip poſſeſſes without a compliment, in its firſt excellence; the laſt you are determined to acquire: you will ſucceed, for this is a fruit which application produces from the other.

To him who will aſſuredly be poſſeſſed of theſe original requiſites for excelling in oratory, and who enjoys from nature every other neceſſary endowment, it may not be foreign to obſerve, that the ſweetneſs of *Æſchines*'s voice added no inconſiderable grace to his harangues; and that the figure and deportment of *Cicero*, at once the fineſt gentleman, and the fineſt man of his time, communicated an irreſiſtable grace to his Orations.

IN order to ſpeak with eloquence, it is neceſſary firſt to conceive with propriety. No determination was ever more judicious than this of your Lordſhip, that the man who would habituate himſelf to think juſtly can fix upon no means ſo conducive to that end as the ſtudy of the Claſſics. Men whoſe works have travelled down to us thro' ſuch a ſucceſſion of ages, and have been

revered in all of them, muſt have ſome uncommon portion of merit. That which pleaſes at all times, and pleaſes all perſons, that which wants no aſſiſtance from the faſhionable ſyſtem, and which does not depend for its reception on any peculiar turn of mind, muſt be great; and whatſoever has the concurrent teſtimony of mankind to evince its excellence, is the worthieſt model for imitation.

IT is impoſſible to purſue one advantage of this kind without obtaining another: while your Lordſhip conſiders in theſe the arrangement of thought and form of argument, you will, as it were by accident, fall into their propriety of expreſſion. If I were to recommend the Claſſics on a ſingle point, it ſhould be their thoughts: the juſtice of their determinations, the clearneſs of their reaſon, the grandeur and the elegance of their conceptions: this is aſſuredly their firſt praiſe; but he who ſtops here pays them but a limited applauſe. Their expreſſion is every where equal to their ſentiments; and as none but themſelves could have ſtruck out ſuch thoughts, none but themſelves were worthy of expreſſing them.

YOUR Lordſhip will ſee by this applauſe, that I am far from wiſhing to decline the office with which you have been pleaſed to honour me. The putting together and methodiſing my thoughts on ſo intereſting a ſubject, would carry with it its own reward independantly of the conſideration that I was offering my little ſervices where they were ſo infinitely due; and I ſhall have pride in them, if they agree with your own obſervations.

I SHALL not deliver my ſentiments to your Lordſhip as to one who was but beginning to apply his thoughts to the ſubject: I know you have conſidered it already. You have read *Blackwell*, I doubt not, with profit, and *Felton*, with pleaſure; but this is no excuſe againſt proceeding. When I review the little which theſe authors have ſaid, in compariſon with the vaſt deal that may be ſaid upon the ſubject, I conſider them rather as having pointed out the road to what may be done, than having executed it; and have only to wiſh, that I were as able to ſupply as to ſee the deficiency.

NOTHING is ſo eaſy as to praiſe in general terms; nothing ſo ſafe as to applaud that which the world in all ages has, and in all ſucceeding ages will continue to applaud: but this will go but a very little way towards the means of a rational imitation. The beauties in theſe writers are ſo ſtriking, that it is ſcarce neceſſary to point them out; every man who can read the language in which they are written, muſt be affected by them, he that would be uſeful to thoſe who ſtudy them, ſhould not ſay that they are great and beautiful; but how they are ſo. To ſee that a thing is elegant, is no ſtep toward the being able to produce that which is like it: but when we are informed what it is that communicates the air of grandeur, or of elegance that we admire in it; we are in ſome degree directed to the means by which we may throw the ſame, or a ſimilar dignity or beauty into our own compoſitions.

THOSE

THOSE who read the Claſſics for amuſement only, have but a very partial conception of their utility, the great purpoſe to which they may be made to ſerve is that of imitation. The paſſages which we barely admire, have no farther effect upon the mind than that of a fine building, or a beautiful picture; we are aſtoniſhed while we view the object, but 'tis forgotten as ſoon as the eye is removed. On the contrary, he who obſerves with diſtinction, and admires with knowledge, will retain a laſting impreſſion of what pleaſed him on the view, and as he will diſtinguiſh the means while he applauds the end, he will employ the one, altho' he never expects to arrive perfectly at the other.

THE great reaſon why the Claſſic Writers have been ſo univerſally admired, is, that what we eſteem in them is the emulation of all mankind. Every man is ambitious of thinking properly, and of expreſſing himſelf gracefully: every man ſees in theſe authors, an example of all that he is deſirous to emulate; and it is not a wonder, that writings which all men have wiſh'd to parallel, ſhould be in univerſal eſteem. I join with your Lordſhip in the propriety of ſetting up theſe writers as objects of imitation: but I would have that a rational, not a mechanical reſemblance: I would propoſe them as objects of a reaſonable adoration, not of an implicit devotion.

ON this plan, my Lord, I ſhall be ſo free, as every where to look upon theſe authors, great as they are acknowledged, as yet liable

to error; and in the courſe of theſe obſervations ſhall as freely point out what I think to be the defects, as what appear to me to be the peculiar excellencies in each. Nothing can be ſo dangerous as an admiration that would lead into the imitating defects and blemiſhes, under the opinion of their being perfections: beſide I ſhall be conſcious, that while I am pointing out the faults of men of theſe talents, I ſhall be obſerving upon thoſe, into which your Lordſhip would be moſt likely, in an unguarded courſe, to fall.

THE blemiſhes of theſe writers, my Lord, ariſe not from a deficiency, but from a redundancy of genius: men of their capacities had more occaſion to repreſs than to urge on their ſpirit, and thus I am aſſured your Lordſhip will find it with your own. Nor will it be of more uſe to you to obſerve, in what the greateſt ſpeakers of all times have excelled, than where they have indulged their fancy, till they have run into unanſwerable lengths. The blemiſhes of this kind, in theſe writers, my Lord, are few; but as they are in theſe writers, one will ſtand in the place of a thouſand. I have ſaid thus much, in palliation of my producing any mention of their faults at all; but as theſe obſervations are meant rather as admonitions to your Lordſhip, than profeſſed eloges on them, it is my buſineſs to give a true, rather than an affectedly pompous character of them. After this, I am ſenſible the account will contain few articles but of praiſe, and I am equally ſenſible, that to be juſt, that praiſe muſt be delivered in the warmeſt

eſt terms. What I intend by the mentioning this, is to ſhew, that impartiality is the principle on which I ſet out; and that theſe remarks will be rather eſſays of uſe than of oſtentation.

IF I were writing concerning the Claſſics, to one wholly unacquainted with them, I ſhould begin, perhaps, where thoſe ſet out who teach them at ſchools, and firſt mention thoſe which are moſt familiar to a tender capacity, and moſt eaſy of conſtruction; but when I recollect that it is to your Lordſhip I write, that you have already gone thro' ſo much of them as a ſchool conſideration recommends, and are able to recommence the attack with equal eaſe from any quarter, I ſhall proceed on a very different method. When I conſider that your Lordſhip's intent is to ſtudy them rather with a view to their beauties than their mere expreſſion, and to form your own genius upon them; I ſhall ſet out, not with the moſt familiar but with the moſt elegant; and as perfectly to comprehend their graces of every kind, is the great point, I ſhall firſt ſpeak of the Orators, that your Lordſhip's taſte for the forming a ſtyle may be quite eſtabliſh'd, prior to all other conſiderations; and only thoſe things which are moſt of all conſpicuous for their elegance, on this head, be received as models. From theſe I ſhall proceed to the Hiſtorians, whom your Lordſhip will alſo find to be frequently Orators, tho' not always, and whoſe manner would be well in moſt things but not in all, to copy in the purſuit of eloquence. After we have thus gone

through thoſe who are the great and proper models of ſtyle, and from the remembrance of their beauties have been enabled to form a judgment as we have paſſed along, as to which of all the paſſages of the Hiſtorians, whom we have moſt conſidered, deſerve the name of eloquence, and are worthy to be imitated; which, tho' great and proper in the Hiſtorian, are to be avoided in the Orator; when we have by this means added to a true idea of the beauties of phraſe, a knowledge of all the occurrences of the times; we will proceed to the Poets; and we ſhall then only be in a condition to judge properly of them. It is the cuſtom to begin with them, but this is entering on them at a time when it is impoſſible to read them with any proportional degree of advantage. When we are acquainted with figurative language, and have been familiar with all the heighths that proſe can attain, we are in a condition to reliſh the flights of poetry; and things under this view appear proper, that to the unformed reader ſeem monſtrous. We expect more; will allow for extravagance in poetry, and we enter into its beauties. On the other hand, without acquaintance with the ſtory of thoſe times in which, and concerning which the Poets wrote, we read them rather with wonder, than true and rational applauſe. He who has not before inform'd himſelf that it was the pride of the *Romans* to deduce themſelves from the *Trojan* race, will have but an odd opinion of a great many things in *Virgil*, which were intended to favour that ſyſtem: and he who does not firſt know that *Greece* conſiſted of many little ſovereignties, and that the unanimity of

theſe

theſe in their opinions and operations was their ſtrength and ſafety, will loſe the great merit of *Homer*'s Iliad, the ſcheme and purpoſe of which was to recommend harmony among them.

IF your Lordſhip were at a time of life, when the capacity is too weak, or the judgment too unform'd to comprehend at one time, all the advantages of Claſſic Study, I ſhould have fallen on another method; but of this I am moſt confident, that your Lordſhip, who have theſe noble views from the renewing an acquaintance with them, or any who chuſe at a period, when they are capable of conſidering and comprehending all their beauties, to recommence an acquaintance with them, will find this the method of reading them to perfect ſatisfaction, and with full advantage. When they have thus made way for one another, every part will be underſtood, and not one of them can be read with the due pleaſure or profit without ſome prior acquaintance with the others: the Orators requiring ſome knowledge of the hiſtory of the times to underſtand them, as well as the Hiſtorians ſome acquaintance with eloquence and ſtyle, in order to comprehend the propriety and graces of their expreſſion. What will be retained of the firſt reading, let it have been at ever ſo early a period, or under ever ſo diſadvantageous circumſtances, will anſwer this purpoſe.

I HAVE given my reaſons for the method in which I would recommend it to all of an advanced period and finiſh'd underſtanding, to

ſtudy the Claſſics; and when I conſider the intent with which your Lordſhip in particular reads them, it is not difficult for me to fix with whom I ſhall begin. When I reflect that your Lordſhip's end is imitation, to underſtand that word in its nobler and original ſenſe; when I conſider that your Lordſhip means to adopt into your own imagination all the principles on which they became immortal, and to enrich our language with all the graces of theirs: when I conſider that the end of this emulation is the being eminent in an aſſembly where the intereſts and concerns not of your own country only, but of all Europe, I had almoſt ſaid of all the world, are to be determined, I cannot be at a loſs with which of them to begin as a model. When I conſider that the deſign is to render the qualities of the beſt heart that ever was poſſeſſed by a *Briton* uſeful to the world; and that ſtrength of expreſſion and manly eloquence are the methods by which this is to be attain'd, I am not at a loſs where to ſet out. I cannot be backward in firſt recommending him, who of all the ancient declaimers, had with the uprighteſt intention, the moſt power; with the nobleſt heart, the moſt commanding eloquence: who had the command of every paſſion of an audience, as perfectly as of his own: who could not only make what impreſſions he pleas'd upon them, but could make them in what degree he pleas'd: who had the addreſs always to diſtinguiſh what were the reigning paſſions of his audience, and to raiſe and direct them whitherſoever and in what degree ſoever he pleas'd, and who when they were not poſſeſſed of ſuch as would

would ſerve his purpoſe, could create them: who could inſpire them with his own ſentiments, and enflame them with his own zeal, and never failed, to make every man that heard him, join in his opinion. This was eloquence, and this your Lordſhip will under your preſent reſolutions ſoon poſſeſs: this, under the ſame advantage as it poſſeſſed in the genius who firſt exerted it, the known concurrence of a noble, a juſt, and an unbiaſſed heart, for under the influence of ſuch only, your Lordſhip will always employ its force and its perſuaſion, will, I doubt not, one day, command a *Britiſh* ſenate, as fully as the other did an *Athenian* aſſembly.

LETTER II.

On the Stile and Manner of *Demoſthenes*; and the other Orators, *Greek* and *Roman*.

I Concluded, my dear Lord, the letter in which I recommended the Orators of old time, as proper to be firſt ſtudied by him who intends to rival all their powers, or by him, who would only with the greateſt advantage go through them all, with particulariſing *Demoſthenes* as worthy the firſt regard. *Demoſthenes* ſhould be indeed to the Orator, what *Homer* is to the Poet: he is not to be look-

ed over and forgotten: in him will be found the ſource and completion of all eloquence: with him, your Lordſhip ſhould begin, and with him conclude: he is to be turned over with the evening hand, and with the morning; and as we have begun with his fire and ſpirit, we are to end with his addreſs. *Iſocrates* was accurate, but *Demoſthenes* was great; the one could perſuade, but the other commanded: you applaud *Iſocrates*, but you are aſtoniſhed at *Demoſthenes*; and you never fail to find the perfect approbation attended with as perfect a conviction. *Æſchines* is ſofter and more inſinuating, but the tryal was made between this perſuaſion and *Demoſthenes*'s power, and the event was terrible to the antagoniſt who coped with it: in the place of that exile which the rival Orator had intended to procure againſt *Demoſthenes*, himſelf ſubmitted to it. But it is not only the compariſon with *Iſocrates*, or the victory over *Æſchines*, that afford us proof of the ſuperiority of his amazing genius. *Cicero*, whom ſome have ſet up as a rival to the *Greek* himſelf, had other thoughts of him: he conſidered him not as his rival, but as his maſter. He confeſſes that it was the eloquence of *Demoſthenes* that made him an Orator; and as *Virgil* ſays of *Homer*, all that he dares attempt is to follow his footſteps, and adore him at a diſtance; he acknowledges, he boaſts, that he had made it his conſtant and continual practice to follow his example, but that he never could attain to his perfections.

I AM ſenſible that your Lordſhip will, on this encomium, be running to your ſtudy to ſeize upon

on the Orator. What can be ſo great applauſe! methinks I hear you ſay, as the teſtimony of the great *Roman* Orator, that he could never equal him: and muſt not he be all perfection whom ſo great a judge applauds in ſuch full terms! the anſwer perhaps is unexpected: no! far from perfection; *Demoſthenes* with all the powers that human nature ever beſtowed upon man for oratory, and with all the effects of an indefatigable courſe of ſtudy in improving them, is full of faults. Let us conſider theſe, before you take up the book, leſt the general opinion ſhould guide you againſt your own judgment; leſt you ſhould take them for beauties, becauſe you find them in *Demoſthenes*, and inſtead of avoiding, make them objects of imitation. Nothing is ſo fatal as an implicit adoration of any author: there is none without his blemiſhes, and this undue reſpect often receives them as beauties. Theſe are the moſt ſingular and ſtriking things alſo, and in conſequence are moſt naturally, as well as moſt eaſily imitated. We ſee thoſe who copy the voice or attitudes of others in ordinary life, always mimick the defects inſtead of the character; and without a careful examination of the object, imitation, tho' its model be truly great, becomes ridiculous.

FAULTS into which *Demoſthenes* could fall, muſt be ſuch as few would eſcape, without a very cautious reſerve. To enumerate them would be of ſervice; but to ſhew them in ſuch writings is placing them in the true point of view, for the moſt perfect attention. Your Lordſhip will be proud on ſimilar occa ions

to have eſcap'd errors into which ſo great a writer has fallen; and when once pointed out as blemiſhes, the beauty of the writings which they deform, will be a means of forcing them many times more ſtrongly on the memory. Without a previous caution of this kind, I ſhould tremble for your Lordſhip, whoſe reſpect for the author might ſtamp a new character on theſe his imperfections. It is neceſſary to point out the general nature of theſe blemiſhes in the greateſt pieces of oratory that are left to us, and the neceſſity will plead my pardon for the doing it. No man, my Lord, admires *Demoſthenes* more, perhaps no man ſo much as I do: I am almoſt enthuſiaſtic in his praiſe, and I ſhall not be accuſed therefore of having pleaſure in naming his defects.

DEMOSTHENES, that *Demoſthenes*, my Lord, whom I admire, whom you will reverence, notwithſtanding that he has excelled in oratory all who went before, and all who will follow him, yet had fewer of the requiſites and qualifications of a perfect Orator than many of his predeceſſors or his rivals. *Iſocrates* has more art, and *Æſchines* more perſuaſion: in one you ſee all the force of arguments well arrang'd: in the other all the elegance of a ſteady perſuaſion. But tho' *Demoſthenes* wanted all theſe, he might deſpiſe that want. Perhaps he did ſo. In the place of their art he had all the powers of nature: where they ſoftned, he melted; where they convinced, he aſtoniſhed. If theſe great names ſhrink under the compariſon with his, even *Cicero*'s will not bear the ſame view without ſuffering by the approach. The *Roman* Orator has all the art

art of an *Iſocrates*, and all the ſoftneſs of the rival *Æſchines*, but he wants that amazing power of the great *Greek*. Amplification is his great talent; and this *Demoſthenes* affects to deſpiſe. While the *Roman* is collecting from all parts every circumſtance that may have weight in favour of his arguments, the *Greek* burſts forth with ſome one vaſt image, that bears down all before it; that aſtoniſhes and confounds while it convinces; and, attacking at once the judgment and the heart, he is doubly ſecure of victory. *Demoſthenes*, is, without a queſtion, the firſt and greateſt of all uninſpired writers in the ſublime. He, my Lord, who has moſt underſtood that firſt honour of the writer, acknowledges as much; and in the ſame courſe of thought which I have purſued in the compariſon, where he has compared the eloquence of *Cicero* to the diffus'd flame of ſome vaſt conflagration, communicating its influence all round, and gaining new force and power from every quarter, exerting itſelf brightly every where, and comprehending every part of its ſubject; he yet gives the palm to *Demoſthenes*, by comparing the force, rapidity and violence of the *Greek*, to thunder, burſting at once upon us: as unexpected and unforeſeen; diſplaying at one effort, the whole collected force of his faculties: too great, too auguſt for ſcrutiny.

BUT it was my buſineſs to point out thoſe defects in this great writer, which your Lordſhip's eye might poſſibly overlook, under the dazzling influence of ſuch perfections. To mark out the ſeveral requiſites for the compleat

pleat Orator, I muſt refer to other ſources; and it will be moſt expreſſive of my caution, after theſe, to mention his defects. If you would ſtudy harmony and turn of periods, you muſt ſearch for all their beauties in *Iſocrates*. In his writings, which are the moſt finiſhed, the moſt laboured, of thoſe left us by the *Grecians*, you will find a ſmoothneſs of ſtyle, a flowing eaſe and elegance of expreſſion, a ſweetneſs and delicacy that charm and raviſh the ear; but this is not conviction. You muſt not wonder at this excellence, my dear Lord, in *Iſocrates*: no man had ſtudied language more, he taught it, and the time which he employed in finiſhing his periods, was ſo great, that with his advantages of power and perfect knowledge, it were impoſſible they ſhould be other than perfectly elegant. You know one of his orations confeſſedly coſt him ten years, and many of the others are nearly as much laboured.

As I have mentioned *Iſocrates*, I cannot do him the injuſtice to ſtop here. I cannot devote a letter ſingly to him; and you muſt not, my dear Lord, look upon it as digreſſion, if in the courſe of thoſe letters which I propoſe to write to you on this ſubject, I often take occaſion in this manner, to introduce a character, which I ſhall not have leiſure to conſider alone.

THE character of one Orator will be of all means the beſt, to lead towards the perfect underſtanding of another; and it will be eaſy as well as profitable, to return to the ſubject after ſuch a collateral enquiry. This, my dear Lord,

Lord, will be the courſe I ſhall attempt, in theſe *Obſervations*, and, if one thing does not in this manner explain, inforce, and exemplify another, I am aſſured, when I conſider to whom it is I write, that the fault will not be your Lordſhip's.

ISOCRATES, whom it would be ſlander to praiſe only on the harmony of his writings, poſſeſſed many and great qualifications as an Orator, and whatever he poſſeſſed, he cultivated with an inceſſant aſſiduity. He had knowledge in a degree ſuperior even to that of his rethoric. While you admire the Orator, you will, my Lord, reverence the Philoſopher, and be apt to congratulate the world, that truths ſo divine have gained new eloquence from his delivery. But this is not all, *Iſocrates* poſſeſſes in a great and glorious degree, that firſt and greateſt foundation of true oratory, an honeſt heart. This is a point in which I know you, my Lord, will rival him, and I think you will emulate his ſoftneſs.

ONE ſees a warm and active love of his country transfuſing itſelf into every part of his works: he ſpeaks with a new fervour whenever this glorious principle comes in his way; and we ſee him in ſome places on this theme, riſing almoſt into enthuſiaſm. It was not only his country, however, that claimed this ſtrong regard from him: his benevolence extended itſelf to all mankind; and he eſteemed the Good of all quarters of the world, his countrymen. Virtue, wherever he found it, en-

engroſſed all his attention, and enjoy'd his warmeſt praiſe; nor did he diſtinguiſh whether its poſſeſſor was *Greek* or *Barbarian.*

VIRTUES like theſe, my Lord, are never loſt upon the world; even thoſe who wiſhed to confine all virtue and all glory, within the limits of their own country, reſpected and honoured that open mind, which allowed it wherever it was to be found, and even loved the man, that ſeemed to ſeek it out from its retired haunts. The *Greeks*, a virtuous as well as a wiſe people, eſteemed this Orator as they ought: they reſpected the good as much as the great man, and the known integrity of his heart added graces to the moſt conſummate eloquence.

YOU ſee, my Lord, altho' *Demoſthenes* is my favourite Orator, I am not ſo blinded by a partial fondneſs, as to make him the ſole pattern of perfection. I propoſe to you another, as a model in many things, and I ſhall mention many things in him, which you muſt avoid. It muſt be confeſſed, that *Iſocrates* is, of all the eloquent of old time, the moſt diſintereſtedly virtuous. *Demoſthenes* could praiſe his *Athens*, and *Cicero* extol the *Roman* greatneſs, but 'tis in *Iſocrates* that we muſt look for virtue applauded as virtue; philoſophy inculcated and reverenced as philoſophy; not as the pride of this, or the invention of that country.

RESOLUTION is another great and neceſſary quality of the Orator, and it would be hard to ſay who ever poſſeſſed it in a more exalt-

ed

ed degree than *Iſocrates*. If he is leſs pompous than *Cicero*, he is more firm; if he is leſs earneſt than *Demoſthenes*, he is not leſs unalterable. A calm ſteadineſs of ſpirit is a great character of his mind, and in this he was inflexible. You find him always perſiſting in his deſigns, ſpeaking freely to kings, and talking of the vices of thoſe whom others would have feared, with great freedom. It is true, he is every where cool in this, and we never ſee that fire and ſpirit which the others boaſt, unleſs when he is animating his country againſt the *Barbarians*; and there, it is not too much to ſay, he often ſeems inſpired with the Soul of *Demoſthenes* himſelf.

WHILE you admire theſe ſentiments, my Lord, in *Iſocrates*, you will be charmed with the language in which they are conveyed. That harmony, on occaſion of which I have introduced the mention of this Orator, in which he excells all men, and which is greatly wanting in *Demoſthenes*, is not, my Lord, an accidental grace: it is a labour'd, a ſtudied and concerted thing, and all his writings, tho' in proſe, are meaſured proſe; a form of writing not leſs difficult, perhaps more elegant, as well more varied, and equally harmonious with verſe. *Cicero* does him great honour upon this account. He gives *Iſocrates* the praiſe of having firſt ſpoken of a meaſured proſe, and adds, that if ſomething like it appear in the works of thoſe who went before him, it was accident, and only appeared caſually and partially. In this Orator the *Roman* acknowledges it the effect of art and deſign, and allows

lows it to have been kept up univerſally. We obſerve that people, under the influence of violent paſſions, naturally ſpeak in blank verſe, at leaſt it is in this kind of meaſured proſe. An Orator could not but be often under the ſame influence: a part of his oration, therefore, would be neceſſarily in meaſure, and it muſt be a deficiency not to render it equal in all its parts. None was ſo equal to this taſk, as he, who beſide the ſpeaker, was the teacher of eloquence. He had conſidered it, he inculcated it by regular leſſons among his pupils. *Demoſthenes* was a boy, while this maſter of eloquence gave leſſons on the art; and I am aſſured your Lordſhip will agree with me when you have conſidered the writings of both, that it was no ſmall misfortune to *Demoſthenes*, that he was not of his ſchool. The natural powers of that Orator would in many caſes doubtleſs have borne down the leſſons of *Iſocrates*'s art, but they would have exerted themſelves to a vaſtly greater degree, with the aſſiſtance of rule.

IT was well that *Iſocrates* was maſter of this eloquence, the ſubjects on which he treated merited all its aſſiſtance. He never employed it unworthily: for the moſt part on themes of dignity and grandeur, to which no other language could be equal. Tho' Oratory is my immediate ſubject in this place, I ſhall not fear to deviate ſo far from the deſign, as to recommend *Iſocrates* to your Lordſhip on another conſideration. He is ſo great a Moraliſt, and ſo good a Philoſopher, that independently of his qualifications, and uſe, as a model

a model of elegant ſpeaking, I know he will be always a favourite with you, as a monitor in every article of private as well as public life.

SHALL we return to our deſign. I named *Iſocrates* to you, my Lord, as an example in that harmony and ſmoothneſs of expreſſion, which is one of the great deficiencies in *Demoſthenes:* no man ſelected his terms ſo properly as *Demoſthenes;* no man has been happier in the choice; no man ever had the art of arranging them in ſo free and affecting a manner, but in this ſtudy of greatneſs he neglected grace. They might have been better combined, himſelf occaſionally has ſhewn us that they might, but my Lord, to ſee the perfect model in this way, you are to look up to *Iſocrates.* Beware leſt inſtead of cenſuring the harſhneſs of *Demoſthenes,* that in ſome places you ſuppoſe it a beauty; he has excellencies in many of his rudeſt periods, that would almoſt reconcile one even to their roughneſs; but be aſſured, my dear Lord, theſe ſentiments might have been expreſſed in more harmonious numbers, and they would have ſucceeded yet more happily.

DEMOSTHENES either did not know how, or he would not be at the pains to ſoften and refine the natural harſhneſs of his diſcourſe: And another great defect in his writings, your Lordſhip will immediately ſee, is his inequality in their ſeveral parts. From the higheſt flights to which mortal man ever arrived, you will ſee him in a moment ſink into the meaneſt puerilities.

puerilities. I am ſorry to accuſe *Demoſthenes* of ſuch, but if I were ſilent, your Lordſhip would diſcover them in the firſt careful reading. I propoſed to ſet him up as a great but not a perfect Orator. He is not to be ſolely the model, but as the *Grecian* Painter finiſhed his *Helen* out of the beauties of ſeveral different human forms, permit me to recommend it to your Lordſhip, to finiſh your character of the perfect Orator, upon the ſeveral graces of all that have gone before you in the ſame path. I ſhall be glad of opportunities of introducing the characters of other Orators into the eloge which I am giving of this, and as I propoſed to your Lordſhip *Iſocrates* for a model in regard to that harmony, which is wanting in *Demoſthenes*, I ſhall in proſecution of the ſame plan of making a perfect whole out of the imitation of diſtinct parts, produce to you his famous rival *Æſchines*, as an inſtance of one who was happy in that other great point in which the prince of Orators was deficient: the uniformity of his diſcourſes and the equality of their ſeveral parts.

ÆSCHINES, my Lord, with many of the great qualities of *Iſocrates*, wanted that vaſt recommendation, an honeſt and generous heart. His enmity to *Demoſthenes* whom he had no reaſon to hate otherwiſe than as a rival, and whom he perſecuted with an implacable fury, will ſtand as an eternal blot upon his character; nor are we ignorant that many of his warmeſt orations were calculated for the ſervice of thoſe who were enemies to his country, and that he was paid by thoſe enemies for delivering them.

Though

Though we can by no means therefore oppoſe *Æſchines* to his rival in goodneſs of heart, yet we may conſider him in the light of an opponent in the claim to praiſe in oratory; and altho' the conſequences of the contention declare the ſenſe which the *Greeks* of that time had of *Demoſthenes* as the ſuperior, and altho' the writings of both join in the teſtimony that it was ſo, to the preſent time, yet ſuperior as *Demoſthenes* was in the whole, there are parts in which he was leſs eminent, and even the beaten *Æſchines* may be produced to your Lordſhip, as a model of perfection, where *Demoſthenes* can be of no uſe but in the pointing out by his example what you are to avoid.

EQUALITY of the whole piece, is the preſent ſubject of enquiry: in this I have confeſſed *Demoſthenes* deficient; in this, I ſhall aſſert *Æſchines* tho' not perfect, yet excellent in no trivial degree. Nor is this the only thing in which the example of this Orator will be of ſervice. The compariſon of his writings with thoſe of his great rival, will be a happy manner of elucidating this. While the latter is nervous, ſtrong, and convincing, *Æſchines* diſplays what he wants, and is an example to your Lordſhip of the ſoft, the deluding, the inveigling manner. More perſuaſion was never exerted than in the oration of *Æſchines* againſt *Cteſiphon*; in the event of which *Demoſthenes* was more concerned than *Cteſiphon*; and while we read it, we are grieved for the rude manner of his antagoniſt, who with more reaſon we know muſt want this artifice, and perhaps with all his right and juſtice fall a ſacrifice to the addreſs of his adverſary.

Subtilty

Subtilty is the great ſtrength of *Æſchines*, and altho' I would by no means be underſtood to recommend to your Lordſhip arts which I know you would deſpiſe, yet the inſinuation of *Æſchines* may be a moſt inſtructive leſſon to thoſe who will employ it to better purpoſes. *Æſchines* is very happy in his characters: he is indeed ſevere, but there is a ſoftneſs amidſt all his hatred that ſeems to oil the knife which cuts the throat. He has pleaſantry, and tho' nothing is more difficult than to introduce that properly in grave diſcourſes, he has ſo agreeable a manner with it that it never can diſguſt. Your Lordſhip will ſee him in many places an inſtance worthy copying in this: but you will alſo obſerve that there are paſſages too coarſe to be imitated or approved, and that even in regard to the better; but a man of prudence would introduce them leſs frequently. *Æſchines* when he is not too angry, has a very happy way of managing his raillery; he is very happy in his ironies, and has introduced occaſionally every figure of ſpeech greatly to his advantage: he is generally cloſe to his ſubject, but when he runs into digreſſions they are always appropriated, and ſuch as lead him naturally again into the thread of his argument: when you think you have loſt him on theſe occaſions, he often returns in a ſurpriſingly happy manner upon you, and you are at once pleaſed with his addreſs, and convinced by ſome collateral proof which you by no means conſidered to be ſuch, 'till he ſtrikes out the connexion. It is by theſe artifices that *Æſchines* is eternally at work to cheat you of your aſſent, while *Demoſthenes* labours to convince you that you ought to give it. The conſequence of that diſpute in which they

both

both had exerted all their powers for the ſuperiority, on the compiling the materials for which they had both beſtowed many years, declared the *Greeks* a wiſe as well as an honeſt people. *Æſchines* ſpoke firſt, and tho' his rival at that time ſtood high in the public favour, he managed his accuſation with ſo much addreſs, and preſerved ſo uniformly the ſame tenour in every part of his oration, that the opinion taken upon hearing any one ſentence of it was confirmed and countenanced by all the reſt; and thoſe who thought there was artifice yet knew not where to fix it, and gave up the man they loved as loſt. Read *Æſchines*'s oration againſt *Cteſiphon*, my Lord, and ſuch is the power of perſuaſion, and ſo perfect a maſter of that power was *Æſchines*, that you will join with the *Greeks* in giving up his adverſary. But then, my Lord, read the defence, and you will do as they did when they heard it; you will abſolve him, and devote his enemy to puniſhment. You will ſee, my Lord, in this oration of *Demoſthenes*, all the genuine fire, all the pure ſpirit of oratory: all that the ſtrength of human genius can produce is in it, but 'tis far from equal throughout: inſtead of the laboured ſameneſs of *Æſchines*, you have here, after paſſages that aſtoniſh you by their force, things that would have ſcandalized a boy. While you reverence the author in one page, you would pity him in another.

I cannot give you a ſtronger inſtance, my Lord, of that inequality ſo unhappily ſeen in the writings of *Demoſthenes*, than in this celebrated, this deſervedly celebrated harangue. You will ſee it amidſt ſo many beauties in this place, that I know there will be double reſolution in you of avoiding

avoiding it. I do not present the antagonistic piece of *Æschines* as the most perfect in its kind, or even as the first that might be produced from among the writings of the ancients in this very particular of equality, but it is greatly so, and you will nowhere see the defect and the excellence in so full an opposition. You will naturally read them together, my Lord, and nothing can so strongly mark the contrast.

'Tis an ungrateful task to proceed on enumerating the faults of the writer, whom I respect most of all in the whole series of those which remain to us from these honoured times, but 'tis in your Lordship's service; and I would rather forfeit my title to candour, than one blemish should stand in the company of such excellencies as must surround it in the writings of this Orator, in such a light as to appear to your Lordship an object of imitation. The eloquence of *Demosthenes*, depends for all its force upon the sentiment and spirit. He is by no means copious in his diction; on the contrary, some of his greatest passages might be rendered more beautiful by a schoolmaster. He never affected sounding words as the pomp of laboured periods. He is concise, and tho' that is in many places a great merit, there are others in which it often renders a good thought obscure, and 'tis often ungracefully dry and jejune. When he attempts characters he always fails; he is unhappy in describing the manners; and of all things he is most unhappy when he attempts pleasantry. He often tries hard to be jocose, but 'tis always with so inelegant a manner, that if one smiles, 'tis at his awkwardness in the attempt, not at the object which he would ren-

render ridiculous. Are you not surprised, my dear Lord, to hear me railing at my admired antient? But I have done; these are the faults and the defects in Orations of *Demosthenes*, but these are all the defects and blemishes in him: and to compensate for these, he has merits such as no mortal man ever had before, or probably ever will have. He leaves to others the prettiness of measure and the grace of arrangement in periods, he declines the little arts, for so they plainly have appeared to him, by which others have arisen to eminence in the profession, and depends solely upon those talents which nature had given him, and that cultivation which he labouring at the greater powers of oratory only, had given them. He was right; while the pieces of others please, his ravish; while they persuade, he convinces; and that which they effect by a conceited round of arguments, he does by a single sentence. In him there is nothing of the languor of *Isocrates*, nothing of the formality of *Æschines*: he leaves it to them to sooth, he transports his audience. There is, my Lord, an air of majesty and grandeur in his Orations which none ever will equal, but which of all things it will be most worthy your Lordship to imitate. His address, tho' generally concealed, is amazing, his invention boundless, his readiness on all occasions, his natural and irresistible passions, and more than all things, that force and vehemence with which he bears down all opposing thoughts, are things in which the greatest of the *Greek* and *Roman* Orators are cold and lifeless in comparison of him. These are the basis on which he meant to build his reputation, and he has succeeded: he has erected on this strong foundation an edifice that shall stand when all the

marble temples of his country ſhall not have preſerved one column. By theſe aſtoniſhing powers, he has eclipſed whatſoever has been received as great, whatſoever has been thought noble in the Orators who have gone before him, and at this time, any paſſage or ſingle ſentence in his works, appears to the judicious and the feeling reader worth all the volumes of his cotemporaries and ſucceſſors.

SUCH was *Demoſthenes*, my Lord: not without faults, but where he excelled, ſo ſuperiorly excellent, that we diſregard his blemiſhes. There is nothing that exalts and aggrandiſes a diſcourſe like figures; and no man ever had that happineſs in the uſe of them, which we ſee in *Demoſthenes*. His apoſtrophes are bold and aſtoniſhing; his oaths, by animate and inanimate things, by the gods, and that in particular by thoſe heroes whom he makes gods as he ſpeaks of them, are of a ſtyle and manner not only ſuperior to all that we meet with in the poets as well as proſe writers of all times, but even to our own conceptions: we are aſtoniſhed at the novelty and boldneſs of the exclamation, yet we allow it propriety and much more than propriety, conviction. The famous oath to which I allude in this particular manner, my dear Lord, is that in which amidſt the general deſpondence of his countrymen after the defeat of *Cheroneа*, he appeals to the ſouls of thoſe great men who had fallen in fighting the ſame glorious cauſe of liberty, to teſtify that they had not done wrong in expoſing their lives and ſafeties for their country. By this noble figure he deifies the perſons whoſe names he uſes as men do thoſe of the gods in atteſtation of the moſt ſolemn truths,

truths, and while he pays this high honour, conſoles the friends and relations of thoſe who had then juſt fallen in the ſame cauſe; animates thoſe very friends with the ſame ſpirit and ſentiments, and tells them not in the common way of affirmation, but with a reverend and religious vehemence and pathetic energy, that the event of battle in ſuch a cauſe muſt be always fortunate; for that thoſe who fall have an earlier taſte of that reward which attends virtuous actions, than thoſe who ſurvive: that the latter receive the honours of their country, but the other the favour of the gods, and are admitted into their number. This had been a glorious leſſon if delivered in the ordinary manner, but on the other hand, when it came all at once upon the hearers, collected into a ſingle thought, and delivered in one phraſe, it could not but appear with double conviction to the hearers, and the more ſo as it ſeemed not intended as an admonition but only called in by accident. *Longinus* calls this one of the boldeſt and happieſt figures that has been uſed, and every heart that is endued with the leaſt ſenſe of feeling, bears him true atteſtation.

INTERROGATIONS are another very lively figure; they add an air of freedom and of nature to a diſcourſe, and intereſt the reader in a double manner in the determination. Of all men *Demoſthenes* has ſucceeded alſo moſt happily in theſe. There is a ſpirit and fire in his manner of uſing them that eclipſes the attempts of all others. He ſpoke before large aſſemblies of his countrymen, and the bold ſeverity with which he accuſed them of their faults, added new life and grandeur to

his harangues "Will ye never, says he, have done with hurrying after news? why know ye not the news? a man of *Macedon* lords it over *Athens*, and gives laws to *Greece!* is *Philip* dead? but what if he were dead, your fears would raise another!" The spirit and vehemence of this address acquires new force from the reproach and from the manner in which it is conveyed. But here, my dear Lord, is another circumstance in which *Demosthenes* is a pattern for imitation; the virtues of his life, his honour, his integrity, and the love of his country. His whole course of actions had convinced his countrymen of these, and from that established character, it was that he gained the right of speaking to them with all the sharpness of a monitor, as well as the persuasion of a friend. They received his passion and his reproofs as the offspring of his virtue; and they submitted to them, and were more affected by them, than they could have been by all the manly strains of oratory delivered in a tone of modesty, and humble representation. His known hatred of *Philip*, and his earnestness in the cause of liberty, gave credit to all that he could pronounce with his most pathetic violence; and it was not without reason that monarch declared, that not the *Athenians*, but only that Orator was his enemy. What an honour, my Lord, to have been the directing soul of a whole country in the greatest and most virtuous cause, and to be acknowledged such even by an enemy!

BUT I was speaking of the force which writings, and particularly the writings of *Demosthenes*, receive from figures. Nothing gives so much spirit, life and fire, and no man has used them so freely, yet

yet every where within the bounds of prudence. There are cold critics who declare againſt a multiplicity of them, but he has ſhewn us that a ſucceſſion of theſe enlivening forms of expreſſion may be uſed with elegance when the circumſtance requires; he is unlimited in this particular, and his practice, my Lord, is a better direction in it than all the rules in the world: figures in *Demoſthenes*, are always the effect of paſſion, and it is this paſſion, not the cold caution of the rhetoricians that directs him: as to the number, he often uſes a multitude together, and he is no where more ſucceſsful. In fine, my Lord, the arts of inſinuation and of perſuaſion, accuracy in language, and the juſt arrangement of arguments, may have been the praiſe of others; but manly eloquence is the triumph of *Demoſthenes*. None ever was ſo happy in the pathetic, none ever ſpoke with ſuch force: there is a ſuperior manner, an air of command and of authority in all his Orations, nothing of which we ſee in thoſe of others; and the reception they met with always countenanced this noble pride in their manner.

AN accident, my Lord, determined *Demoſthenes* to the ſtudy of Oratory. He heard *Calliſtratus* ſpeak with great warmth in a good cauſe. He ſaw he was admired, and he ſaw he ſucceeded. *Demoſthenes* was but a boy at that time, but from that moment he became enamoured of the ſtudy; and his indefatigable pains under all the diſcouragements that attended the proſecution of it, ſerve as a leſſon, countenanced by his ſucceſs, to teach all men that few things may not be acquired by a reſolute application; and that the

diſcouragements which attend the firſt attempts are not to be regarded. *Demoſthenes* had received the firſt rudiments of his education, from one whoſe manner was ſo bad, that what remained of it about the youth diſgraced him: and ſo firmly rooted are our firſt conceptions, that it coſt him infinite pains to get rid of this. For many years he paſſed the greater part of the night as well as the day in ſtudy; and as the greateſt of all means of improvement, he courted the friendſhip and intimacy of *Theophraſtus*, and others the moſt celebrated of his time. He began by pleading ſome of his own concerns on a ſuit in which he was engaged with thoſe who had the care of his father's affairs. In his ſpeeches on theſe occaſions the courts admired his reaſons; but the language in which he cloathed them was unhappy, and his manner of ſpeaking more ſo. When he had the courage firſt to ſpeak in the aſſemblies of the people, no man was ever worſe received. The imperfections which had been paſſed over in a court of law here rendered him ridiculous. His voice was bad: his action ungraceful, and his breath ſhort. The diſcouragement, not to ſay the contempt, with which he was received, would have diſheartned any other man: but, my Lord, you will ſee *Demoſthenes* in all things a pattern of imitation. His pride would not ſuffer him to give up under this cenſure. He felt in himſelf the ſeeds and rudiments of true oratory, tho' others would not allow them: he ſaw all that he wanted were but its ſuperficial ornaments, and he ſat down to ſtudy a manner with more application, even than he had gone thro' the more eſſential parts. He found in his own mind every neceſſary power of information, and

and instead of applying to others, his method was to retire from the world for many months together, and converse only with himself. His first attack was upon his natural imperfections as a speaker, and he succeeded against them all. He had a defect in the organs of his voice, so that there were several letters which he could not pronounce, or at least which he had accustomed himself not to pronounce articulately. 'Tis not to be conceived what attention and application will perform; we have masters for forming the voice for pronunciation, and they have remedied many natural defects; but *Demosthenes* was all this to himself. He found means to articulate the whole alphabet, he even contrived assistances for his mouth to supply the defective organs: exercise gave him breath, and he would pronounce a whole oration on the sea-shore in a storm, to accustom himself to noise and disturbance, that he might not be disconcerted by the tumults of a vast assembly. He had the most celebrated players of the time in point of deportment to teach him the proper graces of action, and in the absence of *Neoptolemus*, he would practise before his mirrour for many hours together.

WHILE he was labouring in this indefatigable manner after the mechanical part of his profession, he devoted many more hours to the true and genuine study of eloquence. He was yet more careful to prepare what he was to pronounce, than even to study how he should pronounce it. The pains he took in such a course of time, formed him for all endeavours; and perhaps it is to the necessary sequestrations which

his natural deficiences commanded for their redreſs, that we owe that conſummate eloquence which we who only read *Demoſthenes* meet in his harangues.

EVERY thing contributed to do honour to the Orator at his return to *Athens*, and every thing will always do ſo, my Lord, to him whoſe purpoſes are honourable. He had acquired from the inſtructions of *Neoptolemus* a more graceful deportment than any of his rivals had to boaſt, and his natural fire and vehemence, temper'd by this, became invincible. He was no longer the pouting, liſping, ſhort-breath'd Orator. He had all the graces and elegance of pronunciation, all the charms of deliberation; a beauty only to be acquired by practice and a command of the paſſions: thus qualified for the exterior of an Orator, that argument and eloquence which had marked his firſt attempts to ſpeaking, appeared in a new light; his natural faculties were improved by ſtudy, and he had all the advantages of a long practice. The cauſe in which he embark'd did honour to his talents, it was that of liberty and virtue, againſt *Philip*. His integrity was unmoved, and while every other Orator was bought off, it was confeſſed, that all the gold of *Macedonia* could not bribe *Demoſthenes*.

THESE were the advantages, my Lord, under which this Prince of Orators appeared at length in *Athens*; and is it poſſible he ſhould have miſſed of eminence? He was received as he deſerved; can more be ſaid on this occaſion? He was at that time honoured by his country, as he is now by all the world. His art in managing his

his arguments and disposing and arranging his proofs, altho' greater than that of all men, was wholly concealed and hid under the appearance of nature that shewed itself throughout his works. His most premeditated pieces he had the address to throw into the form of immediate thoughts, and this in a great measure by the help of figures, and of none more than of those interrogations which abound in his writings, and which gave his harangues an air of conversation with the assembly, and made every part of them seem to grow upon some immediate occasion. His language was pure and unaffected: he avoided; it was evident that he disdained, the little arts of other Orators in the choice of words. He was always simple and perspicuous; while their affectation rendered them obscure and labouredly unintelligible. No man had ever half the energy and vehemence of *Demosthenes*; but that was not all his superiority, he had of all men the happiest way of collecting together every thing that could make for his purpose, and of giving a grace and importance to the most trivial circumstance. He would run into the most distant and unexpected paths in search of support for his argument; and while his audience were almost lost and in pain lest the Orator should be lost too, he would return upon them with an unexpected stroke, and shew all that he had been about, was but a part of his argument.

To sum up his character, my Lord, he was equal to the greatest subjects; and yet had the address to manage the least with advantage. He was always earnest in proportion to the importance of his subject, and altho' opposition always

favoured him, it was not his greatest advantage. He was always more animated when his sentiments or his conduct were controverted by some other Orator: but he was most himself when his country appeared in danger. In these circumstances, the known probity of his heart gave him a freedom which none else dared to assume; and while he admonished his countrymen to guard against an invader of their rights and liberties, his advice gained a new force from the reproaches with which he joined it. To be attended to, my Lord, the first principle is to be loved; the rational foundation of public love is public respect. We live in an age, my Lord, so just and so discerning, that he, who deserves that respect, will not fail to enjoy it; and not that I doubt your Lordship's qualifications, or the improvement of them, but to do the due honour to that which deserves it; less abilities than *Demosthenes*'s will make the man immortal who employs them to as worthy purposes.

FROM the *Grecian* Orators, my dear Lord, give me leave to lead you to the *Latin*. 'Twas from *Greece* that *Rome* learned all her eloquence; and *Tully*, who possessed it all, acknowledges so much. The florid *Felton* tells his noble pupil, that the divine *Tully* is all the *Grecian* Orators in one. 'Tis easily said, and 'tis the misfortune of such ready assertions, that they are easily remembred. I have told you, my Lord, that *Tully* himself confesses he laboured to imitate *Demosthenes*, but never could come up to his excellencies; or if I had not repeated this, your Lordship would have found it. If the Critic had said that *Cicero* has all the

the eloquence and all the grace of the whole *Roman* world of Orators, it had not been too much: but 'tis injuring the character of the *Grecian*, to say the rest; and indeed 'tis injuring the merits of both, to bring them in comparison. They were excellent both in a very exalted degree; but their excellencies were of a different kind. *Cicero* no where comes up to, or comes near, the divine vehemence of the *Greek*: but neither can the *Greek* pretend to dispute the prize of continued and equal elegance and accuracy with the *Roman*. I have been warm in the praises of the one; and I shall be as warm in those of the other: but he who, according to the custom of most who applaud, should make the same form of words serve for the praise of both, would do little justice to either.

As the character of the *Grecian* Orator is spirit, that of the *Roman* is art: it is not to be inferred from this observation, that we suppose *Demosthenes* wanted rule, or *Cicero* vehemence; both had a sufficient store of either; but the prevailing part in each is this: *Demosthenes* perhaps employed as much time in his studies as the *Roman*; but while all his care was in a manner directed to the sentiment, the other employed as indefatigable an attention on the expression. We are more astonished at the particular passages in *Demosthenes*, but we pay the most general and universal applause to *Tully*. The *Greek* is sometimes confused; and I wish it were not to be confessed, that some of his finest passages are chargeable with this blemish; on the contrary, perspicuity itself appears in every passage, in every part of *Cicero*. If I were to name who among

mong all the antients appeared to me to have the beſt regulated fancy, the cleareſt head, and the moſt accurate judgment, I ſhould ſay *Cicero*. He has all the qualities of a great commander in this ſpecies of war: he knows the ſtrength of every argument that can be produced for his cauſe: no man had ever the art of marſhalling and arranging them with ſuch propriety. He ſees not only in what poſt they will ſtand moſt ſecure in themſelves, but where they can be of moſt aſſiſtance to the reſt. His whole plan is always laid: every member of the oration is a regular part of the whole, and is not drawn in at random, but diſpoſed in the only place where it could be moſt of weight.

I HAVE obſerved to your Lordſhip, that the language of *Iſocrates* is not ordinary proſe, but is meaſured; and tho' not in regular quantity, yet in ſuch a diſtinction as is always pleaſing and ſonorous. It is in ſome degree the ſame with *Cicero*. We admire the roundneſs of his periods, and ſmoothneſs of his cadences, but, if we ſuppoſe this accidental, we err; 'tis as much laboured as that of *Iſocrates*. One may always trace him ſelecting words not only happily expreſſive of his meaning, but compoſed of a proper number of ſyllables, and thoſe alſo of a proper meaſure: on this hidden art, the energy, and much more the ſmoothneſs of ſtyle depends; and 'tis not a wonder, my Lord, that in *England*, where we are ſo far from practiſing it, that I doubt not but many will ſmile to hear me mention it, we have nothing of that muſical elegance and mellow fullneſs of cadence, which we admire, altho' we do not underſtand it, in the antients.

I HAVE heard you expreſs ſome ſurpriſe, my Lord,

Lord, that the univerſal conſent of mankind, when they will ſpeak candidly on the ſubject, is not ſo fully in favour of the ſuperiority of the Claſſics, over all other writers, as that of their profeſſed admirers, and moſt intimate acquaintance. If you will give me leave to indulge an ill-natured conjecture on this ſubject, I would ſuſpect that theſe gentlemen had not read the Originals. You have gone through the Authors, in their own language, early, my Lord, and I doubt not but you have ſince looked into many of their tranſlations: can you not diſcover the reaſon? Where the choice of words, and arrangement and diſpoſition of ſyllables obtains ſo great a ſhare in the beauty of the original; how is it poſſible the beſt tranſlation ſhould convey them to us? Our language, tho' a copious and aſtrong one, is by no means equal to thoſe in which thoſe Originals are written: nor can we expect a Tranſlator to be at the pains, ſuppoſing him of capacity to do it, to ſelect his words, and labour his expreſſion, as the Authors have done. I have been led into this obſervation by the language of *Cicero*, and there is none of all the antients who is ſo fit an inſtance. Our language does not want a verſion of ſome part of his works; and its author has laboured it not a little. I look upon Mr. *Guthrie's* tranſlation of ſome parts of *Cicero* with an eye of great approbation; but it is impoſſible that with the ſenſe he ſhould have conveyed the harmony of the Original.

IF I were inclined to keep up the diſpute about precedency between the *Grecian* and the *Roman* Orator, I ſhould oppoſe to this acknowledged ſuperiority in point of harmony, thoſe obligations which the *Roman* profeſſes, nay glories

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in declaring, that he has to the *Greeks* He is full of applauſe upon their writings, and boaſts that he has enriched the *Roman* language, by tranſlating and by copying in it the beauties of thoſe maſters of the art upon whoſe model he had formed himſelf. It is eaſy to trace the ſeveral paſſages in which he was indebted to thoſe whom he thus acknowledges his benefactors; but we ſhall find him in theſe not the mere copyeſt, the diſingenuous plagiary, or the ſervile imitator. The uſe he made of his originals, is unknown to thoſe who affect to imitate the antients in our times: he read them 'till he poſſeſſed himſelf of all their ſentiments, and theſe he adopted, together with their forms of ſpeaking, into his own compoſition. 'Twas thus the *Roman* language was indebted to his endeavours on their foundation: 'twas thus that he tranſplanted into his orations, the graces, the ſpirit, and the manner of the *Greeks*. He has not on any occaſion ſtolen the thought, or the expreſſion of the *Greek*, to adapt it to ſome diſtant occaſion in his own ſubject. This is the modern road of imitation, and it is to this we owe it, that we ſee the mangled ſcraps of the antients, the *diſjecti membræ poetæ* appear ſo aukward and ſo inexpreſſive in our quotations, or our appropriation of them. *Cicero* when he was to ſpeak upon ſome intereſting topic, did not conſult what *Demoſthenes* had ſaid on ſome parallel occaſion, but he queſtioned with himſelf how would *Demoſthenes* have expreſſed himſelf on this. By this means he retained the ſpirit of his Original with no part of his immediate form, and never was indebted for an expreſſion to any of them; unleſs when his own language afforded none ſufficiently ſignificant or ſufficiently elegant.

CICERO,

CICERO, my dear Lord, had all the advantages that could concur to form an Orator. What models he had before him, I have already mentioned. What was there wanting that could have contributed to his forming himself to every degree of perfection upon them, or even to have made him rival them without the assistance of any foreign aid? He was a man of family and fortune: his earliest education had been as favourable to his future designs, as that of *Demosthenes* had been unfortunate. He had genius from the cradle; and he had ambition. None was applauded earlier in life, and no man ever had a soul more susceptible of the joys of this kind of triumph. He had an early bent to poetry; but he soon form'd the just opinion, that good prose was preferable to any poetry, excepting that of those few whom he could not expect that himself or any succeeding genius should rival. Philosophy was a subject of his unwearied application, but rhetoric and eloquence were the great and ruling passion. He studied the greatest models, he practised privately, he retired from the busy and disturbed state of affairs in *Rome*, and suffered his studies to be interrupted only by such conversation as was itself in the place of study, the conversation of those whose common discourse was eloquence and wisdom.

HIS appearance in the public world was of a piece with his preparations for it. He saw the speakers all refuse the cause of *Roscius*, prosecuted at the instigation of *Sylla*. He undertook what they feared to attempt: he took up the defence of the accused, and his oratory was crowned with the most honourable of all applause; his client was acquitted. MANY

MANY would have ſat down with ſuch a proſpect of ſucceſs; but *Cicero* was animated by it to purſue his ſtudies farther. Conſcious that this applauſe ought only to ſtand as a preſage of what he might deſerve, and of a temper to ſuppoſe nothing done while any thing remained undone; he, inſtead of ſitting down at *Rome*, travelled to *Greece*, and ſtudied at *Athens* all that had rendered the Orators of that city famous.

THE tour of *Cicero* to *Greece*, was not like thoſe of the modern Virtuoſi to *Italy*, to ſee the places where things may be learned, and then to return as ſatisfied as if they had learned them. He ſtayed in *Athens* 'till he could declaim in *Greek*, ſo as to rival their beſt Orators; and when he had filled that diſtant country with his fame, he returned to his own, and even then rather to practiſe than to engage in cauſes.

HERE, my dear Lord, were foundations from which nothing leſs than excellence could ſpring; a great genius cultivated with an unparalleſled aſſiduity. But this was not all nature had done, or art had added for the compleating of the *Roman* Orator. He had the fineſt figure of almoſt any man in his time: there was at once a winning and a commanding grace about his perſon, he had dignity in his aſpect, perſuaſion in his manner; and in his eye a diſcernment that frightned all who were concerned againſt him. With this happineſs of perſon, he had combined the moſt engaging addreſs; and before he threw himſelf into public buſineſs at *Rome*, he ſtudied the graces of deportment as a regular ſcience under

under the two moſt accompliſhed perſons of the times, *Raſcius* the Comedian, and *Æſopus* as eminent in Tragedy. This was the proper ſchool in which to learn proper and expreſſive deportment; and notwithſtanding the low eſtimation in which the theatre may be at this time with ſome of the graver people, I am convinced, my Lord, that if our Orators, whether thoſe of the bar, or ſuch as exert their talents before a much more auguſt aſſembly, would attend to the geſtures and manner of Mr. *Garrick* or Mr. *Barry*, we ſhould ſee a new ſpecies of eloquence eſtabliſhed among us.

ALL who have heard fine ſpeaking with us, have lamented the deficiency of a due deportment. Can any thing be ſo abſurd or ſo contemptible, as the unaltered, not to ſay, ſolemnity, but rather, ſtupidity of face, with which the moſt celebrated of our council go thro' the pleadings on which the fortune, perhaps the life, of their client depends? Can any one attend upon the reaſonings in a much higher court; and in which not the private concerns of any one perſon, but the intereſts of the kingdom, perhaps of *Europe*, are concerned, and not be out of countenance to ſee either no action at all, or the moſt aukward and inexpreſſive action imaginable attending the higheſt ſtrength of reaſon and the moſt manly eloquence? On the contrary, *Demoſthenes* inforced by geſtures at once vehement and full of dignity, all the ſtrong effects of his eloquence; and *Tully*, to return to our immediate ſubject, perſuaded by his deportment while he convinced by his reaſons.

MY Lord, let not the talents of an Orator ſeem below the cultivation of the Greateſt. They are an honour to whatſoever rank poſſeſſes them; and when joined with a good heart, their influence is irreſiſtible. *Cicero* had ambition; a portion of it is laudable; if he had too much, his oratory favoured and ſupported it all: how certainly then will the ſame talents ſupport that which is not unwarrantable? *Cicero*, my Lord, by the ſole advantage of his eloquence, and the eſtimation in which it had placed him, carried his point when he propoſed himſelf for the moſt important and moſt honourable offices in the ſervice of his country. By his eloquence, my Lord, he made his way to thoſe poſts in which that eloquence might be of moſt ſervice to his country. The Conſul could make an uſe of Oratory, that the common man, that even the Prætor, could not: thoſe who knew his love to his country ſaw this; and they eſteemed it a duty to give him its higheſt honours. I know that I ſhall ſee your Lordſhip poſſeſſed of talents, if not equal to thoſe of *Cicero*, yet equal to all the uſes to which *Cicero* directed them. Heaven defend my country from a *Cataline*; but if he, whoſe heart now aſpires to it, ſhould by ſome ill ſteps make advances toward the character, may I ſee him fall by the eloquence, after he has been diſcovered by the diſcernment, of my Britiſh *Cicero*. May I live, if ever I am to ſee the conſtitution of this kingdom endangered, to ſee him whom I am now preſuming to lead along the paths of virtuous eloquence, called in the language of the grateful *Romans*, *the Father and the Saviour of his country*.

I WOULD not recommend *Cicero* to you, my dear Lord, as a pattern in all things. It is the character of human nature to err; and *Cicero* was but a man. You will find among his foibles vanity. I need not warn you to avoid a folly that always diſappoints the end which it purſues; and that is the direct contradictory to that modeſty which is the inſeparable companion of merit; and which was one of the firſt ſigns that I diſcovered in your Lordſhip of all that I now ſee promiſed to my country. There is ſomething to be advanced in palliation for the fault, in regard to the revered antient: it was the faſhion of the times; men were allowed to be ſenſible of their higheſt honours, and of all their good qualities. The *Romans* were wiſe, and they meant by this to keep them always acting up to the great character they were allowed; with us it is otherwiſe. Merit that applauds itſelf is diſallowed by all the world beſide. We ſee on the antient eſtabliſhment *Horace* talking of that eternal monument which he had raiſed to himſelf by his verſes, and we are witneſſes that he was right when he declared it would be more laſting than all the pomp of braſs. *Pindar* is as ſenſible of that immortality which he had by his writings ſecured to himſelf, as well as to thoſe heroes whoſe exploits he celebrated; and the humble, the gentle *Ovid*, is as full of the ſame conſideration, and as freely declares it. I mention this, my Lord, in palliation of that ſtrange vanity which the *Roman* Orator diſcovers when he is ſpeaking of himſelf. There is very little that cuſtom will not reconcile, but ſhould any man declare himſelf in ſuch a ſtyle in theſe days

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he would find that powerful incident as ſtrongly againſt him. It is the faſhion of theſe times to be humble, and tho' a diſagreeable part to play, it is always rewarded. We always think better of the man who ſpeaks modeſtly of himſelf; in a degree equal to that in which we ſet him lower than his own opinion, who declares in his own favour.

I HAVE mentioned to you, my dear Lord, the ſingle fault of *Cicero*; and if I have been more full than perhaps may have appeared needful in my remonſtrances againſt it, it is becauſe I knew the propenſity to ſpeak well of ourſelves is always high in young minds, where there is merit to ſupport it; and the more, becauſe I am well aſſured, that the faults of thoſe whom we attempt to imitate, are, unleſs great care be taken to prevent it, the firſt things engrafted on the emulation. Forget his vanity, and *Cicero* is of all men who have written in the *Roman* proſe, the greateſt: his power is beyond all that has elſe appeared in the writings of his country; his accuracy ſo preciſe and laboured, that he is known to have ſpent hours in determining on the propriety of a monoſyllable, or the diſpoſition of an adverb, and to have conſulted every friend who had judgment on the minuteſt difficulty in which the propriety of the language was concerned.

I HAVE obſerved that as the *Grecian* Orator commanded: it was the talent of the *Roman* to perſuade. No mortal man was ever maſter of this art in ſo eminent a degree. He had ſtudied all the weakneſſes as well as all the paſſions of the human

human heart, and had addreſs to intereſt them all in his favour. He would frequently plead to the paſſions inſtead of judgment of thoſe who were to determine; and never without ſucceſs. None who heard were out of the reach of his eloquence, and it has more than once been in his power to appeal to the tears of thoſe who ſtood about him, to prove that human nature itſelf compaſſionated the man in whoſe favour he pleaded for the pity of his judges.

I HAVE mentioned *Demoſthenes* to you, my Lord, as happy beyond all men in the uſe of figures. It is certain that he deſerves that praiſe: but altho' the *Roman* has neither uſed ſo many, nor thoſe ſo ſtrong, it is he, my Lord, that I would recommend, and not the *Greek*, to your imitation in this particular. There requires to the boldneſs and frequency of figures which we ſee in *Demoſthenes*, all that vehemence of ſpirit and ſublimity of ſentiment, as well as language by which they are ſupported: theſe I muſt confeſs the talent of *Demoſthenes* alone, gifts beſtowed on him by heaven, and denied to all men beſide. He is too great for imitation in theſe particulars; and he that ſhould dare to introduce the boldneſs and the frequency of figures, which he ſees in his writings without thoſe peculiar talents to ſupport them, would be not great, but extravagant; not admirable but contemptible. In *Cicero*, my Lord, you will ſee enough of figures; and you will ſee them introduced and diſpoſed as yourſelf may alſo arrange and introduce them. You will find in *Cicero*, my Lord, all the graces and embelliſhments of ſpeech; and you will ſee them rendered familiar, by the natural and eaſy manner

manner in which they are employed, as well as by the peculiar appropriation of them, and their natural alliance with the ſubject: theſe are the proper ſubjects of imitation, ſince they are more the effect of art and a maſterly knowledge in the ſcience, than of any peculiar natural powers. Examine them independantly of the context, and you will find them eaſy and elegant: on the other hand, thoſe of *Demoſthenes*, altho' the ſubject when conſidered in its immediate circumſtance, warrants and ſupports them, yet independently of this peculiar point, they are bold and ſtrange even to madneſs. To conclude my opinion of the two great Orators in the *Greek* and *Roman* world, as models to the *Engliſh* ſpeaker, I would recommend *Demoſthenes* as the object of admiration, *Cicero* of imitation. The *Greek* ought to be read as often as the *Latin*, and the ſucceſs tho' leſs immediate, will not be leſs certain. He will accuſtom the mind to a great, a noble, and exalted way of thinking; and will throw into the Orator's way an opportunity of judging of thoſe circumſtances under which he may dare, and will at the ſame time preſcribe him the means, and give him an example, of that daring: he will be the ground-work of a glorious boldneſs, while the other will preſcribe the rules and limits under which that extravagance may be indulged. It would be very dangerous to conſult *Demoſthenes*, as to the manner of expreſſing your ſelf, my Lord, on any particular occaſion, ſince without his natural powers to ſupport it, his manner would be unjuſtifiable: on the contrary, there is not a better leſſon in the whole courſe of inſtruction, than to adviſe the reading ſome oration of *Cicero* on a parallel,

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or in ſome degree parallel ſubject before the ſpeaking on any point of great importance.

'TIS dangerous, my Lord, to ſay how *Demoſthenes* ſhould be uſed at this time, farther than in the imbibing a taſte for the ſublimeſt eloquence from a general reading; but uſe *Tully* as he uſed *Demoſthenes*: adopt his manner, imitate, my Lord, tho' you are above copying, his graces, and by making him the pattern and the model, on which you begin, and finiſh every great harangue, enrich our language as the *Roman* did his own from the ſtores of your favourite antient. There is room, my dear Lord, for building on theſe foundations, a reputation, ſuch as no *Engliſhman* ever yet enjoyed. I know your natural diffidence in your own abilities will not let you expect to arrive at this ſupreme honour. But, my dear Lord, the methods are before you, nature has amply ſupplied her part; and tho' you expect not the end, there is no reaſon you ſhould not employ the means: if they fail of that, there cannot be a queſtion of their anſwering all the expectations you have of yourſelf: much more, my Lord, they will anſwer all the expectations which the world has of you.

I am, my Lord, &c.

LETTER III.

Concerning the *Greek* and *Roman* Hiſtorians.

I SHALL always, my dear Lord, I find begin from the *Grecian* ſtores; nor is it a wonder. *Greece* was the birth-place of the ſciences. Knowledge, ſo far as we can trace back its progreſs, had there its origin. It was but late that it travelled from thence to *Rome*; and we find indiſputable proofs, beſide their own confeſſion, that they derived it thence: they not only tell us that their greateſt genius's travelled to *Greece* in order to improve their talents, and adopt the graces and the excellencies of its Philoſophers, and Orators, its Poets, and its Hiſtorians, into their own language, but we ſee the atteſtation of the fact in all their works. The praiſe of invention remains among the *Greeks*: what are the greateſt of the *Roman* works, which remain to us but imitations of ſome of theirs? *Cicero*, your Lordſhip ſees, confeſſes himſelf an humble imitator of *Demoſthenes*; an imitator, that deſpairs to become a rival. If the vaineſt, as well as the greateſt Orator among the *Romans* could ſay ſo; 'tis not a wonder that we find it true. The *Æneid*, what is it but a poem built on the plan of the *Iliad*? and does not its Author in his Eclogues as cloſely follow *Theocritus*?

YOU will ſee, my dear Lord, that to begin properly on every diviſion of the great Writers of old times, I muſt begin with the *Greeks*. After Oratory,

Oratory, the firſt, the great, and the immediate point of utility in your Lordſhip's ſtudies, I am to fall upon its firſt and greateſt ſupport, its moſt immediate and moſt eſſential adjunct, Hiſtory. This, after the immediate ſtudy of the art itſelf, is unqueſtionably the firſt concern, not only as it is from hence that Oratory muſt be ſupplied with its materials, but as the Hiſtorians, at leaſt 'tis true, my Lord, of thoſe Hiſtorians who are our preſent buſineſs, the *Greek* and *Roman* Claſſic Hiſtorians are themſelves Orators. I have met with paſſages in *Thucydides*, that tread upon the heels of ſome of the nobleſt in *Demoſthenes*; and 'tis not too much to ſay, that there are harangues in *Livy*, equal to the fineſt touches of a *Cicero*. Theſe however, are but occaſional. The buſineſs is of another kind.

As I produced from among the *Greeks*, my Lord, the Prince of Orators, *Demoſthenes*, I muſt have recourſe to the ſame Writers for the father of Hiſtory. Your Lordſhip, whoſe reading has not been confined to the works of the antients, is by this time fully ſenſible how very imperfect an idea of the character of an Hiſtorian he muſt have, who formed it upon what he had read of the works of that title, written by the moderns. To have read imperfectly, and compiled without judgment, are the preſent requiſites: and as the affectation of originality leads the Writers to conceal the names of thoſe whom they have plundered, we have not an opportunity of knowing whether they have collected from thoſe of credit, or of detecting their own want of judgment in the choice, or of accuracy in the compilation. They aim at nothing more than the

relating of occurrences, and would think it going out of their way to enquire into the cauſe, or uſurping the province of others, to imitate the harangues which influenced them. They write in their cloſets concerning things which they do not know; and is it a wonder that their readers are in the dark, as much as themſelves? Theſe, my Lord, have not been the talents, theſe the attempts, nor this the place of thoſe who wrote the earlier Hiſtory. I know, my Lord, that we have exceptions among the modern Hiſtorians to the cenſures I have paſſed upon them, and I am proud to ſay the beſt of them are among thoſe of our own country; but this is their general character: on the contrary, my Lord, the *Greek* and *Roman* Hiſtorians, in general, ſpeak of things which they knew: they entered into the cauſes of thoſe effects which they commemorated. They had penetration to dive into the ſecret ſprings, and latent ſources of the ſeveral revolutions which they deſcribed; and they had language equal to their conceptions. They were ſtateſmen, or they were generals of armies; they ſpoke of occurrencies in which themſelves had been engaged, of battles which themſelves had fought; and that ſpirit which your Lordſhip will, at theſe years admire in their writings, much more than when you firſt went through them, has its ſupport in knowledge, and in proportioned abilities.

You will not wonder, my Lord, that I have ſaid the Hiſtorians are themſelves Orators, when you have a little conſidered *Herodotus*, as to his knowledge of facts, his acquaintance with the things which he commemorates and deſcribes;

deſcribes; you will not wonder at it, my Lord, when you conſider, that before he ſat about his work he had viſited all thoſe places of which he intended to ſpeak with that degree of accuracy and preciſion, which characteriſes his hiſtory. He, with an attentive eye, viewed every part of his own country; and when perfectly acquainted, not from report, but from his own experience of the ſeveral memorable parts of its government, and from the moſt certain foundations of its earlier hiſtory, he travelled to *Ægypt*; and to many more of the remote as well as neighbouring countries. He did not gallop through theſe places, my Lord, as our modern travellers do through the ſeveral ſtages of their tour, contented that they can ſay, they have ſeen them, though not acquainted with any thing in them. He remained long upon every ſpot: his genius and abilities recommended him to the acquaintance of the men of knowledge in each; and he collected from them all that was known of certainty, concerning the places which they inhabited. Without this part of the Writer's hiſtory, my Lord, you would be ſurpriſed to hear him talk with ſuch a maſterly air of knowledge, and of certainty concerning things which none had written of before: but with theſe aſſiſtances and advantages, with ſuch talents, ſuch abilities, and ſuch improvements, it is not a wonder, that his hiſtory of the *Greeks* and *Barbarians*, was at that time received with applauſe, as well as aſtoniſhment, both by the *Greeks* and the *Barbarians*; or that as it is recorded of him wherever he came, or whereſoever he appeared among aſſemblies of people, men pointed at him as he paſſed along, and ſhewed to one another,

that *Herodotus* who had written of their wars, and immortalized their victories.

No man, indeed, ever acquired so extensive a fame, during his own life, for his works, as *Herodotus*, on account of his history; nor is it a wonder: the *Greeks* were of all mankind the most vain; and of all species of vanity, that which concerned their battles and their conquests was the greatest. *Herodotus* had finished this great work, just as all *Greece* was assembled together to celebrate the Olympic games. Hither were come from the most remote parts of the country, the greatest and the most considerable persons, whether in rank, in language or employments, to meet those of equal eminence, from the nearer provinces: and beside these, an innumerable multitude of all ranks from all parts. The Historian who knew how acceptable his writings must be to a people of that turn, stood forth upon the theatre, and surprised the assembly with a recital of part of his great work. The applause was such, as man never received before or since. He was encouraged, he was sollicited to proceed; and he went on from time to time, repeating part by part, till all *Greece* had heard all that related to her wars, her conquests, and her glory.

GREECE was the seat of learning, and of eloquence: the Historian repeated his works before those who had capacity to enter into all their beauties, and who were prejudiced in his favour by that love of his country which was manifest throughout every part of them. He obtained more honour than all those who carried off

off the prizes at those games: and at one stroke rendered himself beloved, and revered among his countrymen, and made his name immortal.

THIS is that *Herodotus*, my Lord, whom I have placed at the head of the Historians, and that with reason; not only as excelling them all in many of the great excellencies of historic writing, but in point of time. He is, my Lord, the first and earliest of the uninspired Prose Writers. After the Bible, we have nothing so old as his works. Thus was his History received, by those who were the best judges of it; not only in point of style and manner, but in fact. You may depend upon his truth, my Lord, in most things: in all those which he relates on his immediate knowledge, he is an unquestionable and indisputable authority; there are parts of his work, in which he proceeds upon the information of others, but he always lets you know that he does so: and these are the only parts of him that are not to be received as of certain authenticity. The incidents which regard the *Assyrians*, some of those relating to the *Medes*, and the earlier part of the *Egyptian* history, are of this character, but those who have passed general censures on *Herodotus* (among whom I am sorry to observe, that beside the little cavillers and critics, of late times, there are some of the greatest Historians of antiquity) injure him in an unwarrantable manner. In all these parts he confesses that he puts down tradition, and not matter of his own knowledge: where he demands your credit on his own foundation, he always has a right to it; and it is not too harsh a censure to pass upon *Xenophon*, to

call it rancour; nor upon *Thucydides*, to deduce from envy, what they have ſaid as general in their reflexions on the Hiſtorians who had gone before them; but what they meant ſhould be applied to this parent of hiſtory, by their readers. *Strabo* had envy alſo for the foundation of all thoſe cenſures which he has paſſed upon this great and faithful Writer: moſt of which cenſures are indeed praiſe. That elegance and invention of which he accuſes *Herodotus*, when it does not regard immediate facts, but only circumſtances that embelliſh them, is an honour to him: *Plutarch* has abuſed him, but *Plutarch* was a *Theban*. The *Thebans* had abandoned *Greece*, and joined the troops of *Xerxes*. This was a blot upon their character, only to be effaced by invalidating the hiſtory in which it was recorded; and this ſeems to have been the great ſource of the national *Plutarch*'s cenſures.

WE will give up, my Lord, whatſoever *Herodotus* himſelf ſeems to doubt: whatſoever he is ſo candid to acknowledge he received from leſs certain authority: it is eaſily ſeparated from the reſt, himſelf has ſeparated it; and the remainder is enough to warrant all the applauſe that has been given him. This we cannot bring into queſtion. It was related at a time when the events had been but lately paſt: it was recited in the hearing of thoſe who were judges of the truth of every part of it. All *Greece* declared that ſtory true which concerned all *Greece*; and let not us preſume to doubt it. This, my Lord, may be abſolutely depended upon. This is enough for all our purpoſes. This opens to

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us all the antient history of that famous country, and explains every thing that is mentioned by its Poets. When *Herodotus* speaks of himself, and from his own knowledge, it is absurd to doubt him. When he prefaces a relation with, *as I have been told, as men say*, or closes it with an opinion that *it is not likely it was true*, how absurd, how unjust is it to charge him with delivering it as fact. This is the constant custom of *Herodotus*: I wish I could say it were the custom of other Historians. No man is so candid in his acknowledgements of what is uncertain. No man so absolute, where he speaks of what he knows: and when he is absolute, no man has more right to be believed.

YOU will pardon me, my Lord, that I have entered thus largely into the merits of the dispute, which regards the authenticity of *Herodotus*'s writings. I know no Classic Debate of more importance, since on the truth of his accounts depends the credit that is to be paid to many other Writers; and it was the more necessary, since there is no point in which your Lordship would be so likely to be misled: the fashion of disputing the veracity of this Writer has grown to such a height, that all the censures passed upon the *Grecian* history in general, have been applied and appropriated to him; and the *Roman* Poets and Historians, as well as the Authors of the latter denomination, among his own countrymen, are represented as charging him with falsehood.

NOTHING has been so general, nothing can be so disingenuous, as the charge. The Author

ſet out with a fair diſtinction between what he writes from his own knowledge, what from report alone; and while he claims that credit which is due to the firſt, he excuſes himſelf under the character of an Hiſtorian, for giving place to the latter. I cannot, ſays he, avoid this according to the plan of this work; but theſe things are to be believed no farther than as they ſeem probable. He conſtantly prefaces theſe by a caution, or concludes them with a doubt; and yet theſe are the things, on which his enemies have founded the charge of his want of authenticity.

WHEN you have ſeparated theſe, my Lord, from the reſt of his work, you will have a treaſure of truth and knowledge, ſuch as is not to be found under any other name, or in any other language. Theſe are the cautions under which the Claſſics are to be read to advantage. Young minds which attempt them without theſe admonitions, may be led into error and confuſion, inſtead of that knowledge and clear acquaintance with things they might acquire from them. And this, my dear Lord, although I would not name it 'till I could produce at the ſame time an inſtance of its neceſſity, as well as its utility, has been one of my great motives for writing theſe OBSERVATIONS.

I HAVE ſettled the authority and truth of my favourite Hiſtorian, upon its proper baſis: on this it will ſtand as long as time endures; and the waves of calumny will after this, with all their violence, waſh and purify the baſe of that rock

rock which they labour to undermine. Having ſettled the faith of the Author, it remains that I ſpeak of his ſtyle. I have mentioned *Herodotus*, as an inſtance that I did not wander from the paths of real criticiſm, when I declared the Hiſtorians of old time to have been themſelves Orators. This Prince of Hiſtory is greatly ſo; and what is the more obſervable, the manner of his exerting that talent, is peculiar to himſelf.

It is not without reaſon, that the antient critics have talked of a reſemblance between the ſtyle of *Herodotus* and that of *Homer*: *Plato* has expreſsly copied that Prince of Poets; in many places he ſeems diſputing the prize with him at his own weapons; but this is laboured; and ſmooth and eaſy as *Plato* naturally is, and as we ſee him in the greater part of his works, we diſtinguiſh the ſtudied and the prepared ſtrength of thoſe particular paſſages which ſhew moſt of this emulation. What *Plato* arrived at by art and ſtudy, in *Herodotus* is nature; it is to his honour, but it is a certainty that their genius was alike; nor is there any thing among the writings of the antients ſo ſimilar.

UNDERSTAND me properly, my Lord, in this: it is not in the ſublimity of *Homer*'s ſentiment, this Author is ſo particularly like him. In this *Demoſthenes* is nearer him among the generality of Writers; and in the ranks of the Hiſtorians, both *Xenophon* and *Thucydides* are ſo. It is in the copiouſneſs of invention, the elegance of phraſe, the ſweetneſs, eaſe, and perſpicuity of *Homer*, that this Author reſembles him. No man is ſo

eloquent on ſuch ſubjects. Although they are not the ſublimeſt paſſages of *Homer* that *Herodotus* reſembles in his works, they are the ſweeteſt; and there is this farther praiſe, that he has equalled what he imitates in *Homer*, whereas not even *Demoſthenes* himſelf can be ſaid to equal him in thoſe exalted paſſages, which may be compared, in all things but their grandeur, to ſome in his writings. *Theophraſtus*, as accurate as candid in his criticiſms, allows *Herodotus* to have been the firſt that introduced the elegance of language, and ornaments of ſtyle, into the writings of hiſtory; and we may add to this obſervation of the venerable *Greek*, that what he firſt introduced, he carried to perfection: none of his own, none of ſucceeding times, have been more eloquent: *Thucydides*, who followed him in this, and who therefore hated him becauſe he had already acquired thoſe honours which he aimed to have obtained, in their moſt exalted height; *Thucydides* is loftier, and has a boldneſs in the uſe of figures that is not met with in *Herodotus*: but he wants the eaſe and ſoftneſs of his predeceſſor; and while we are aſtoniſhed at his hyperbatons, we allow all that can be ſaid is too little to expreſs the propriety, as well as form of the metaphors in *Herodotus*.

THUCYDIDES is cloſe and ſhort, he ſticks with a religious punctuality to his ſubject; but while he obtains by this the praiſe of a conciſe perſpicuity, which is no mean one to an Hiſtorian, he robs himſelf of the opportunities of a multitude of beauties. *Herodotus* is prolix and copious, full of obſervation, and frequent in his digreſſions: a reader, who was in a hurry to get

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to the end of the ſtory, would be diſpleaſed at this; but he, who has a fancy like the Writer's, and has a capacity to entertain the whole ſubject with all its beauties, will be charmed with it. This is, my Lord, another reſpect in which *Herodotus* has the exact manner of *Homer*. No Writer except this, ever had the boldneſs to be like him in thoſe flights, from his immediate ſubject: nor is he leſs ſucceſsful than the Poet, in the appropriation of them, or in the choice, whatever the learned dulneſs of ſome Critics may have fancied.

If you would know, my Lord, what is the true judgment to be paſſed upon the ſtyle and manner of *Herodotus*, deſpiſe theſe ſecondary Commentators, and look up to *Tully*: to him, who of all men was the greateſt judge of ſtyle; and who was not afraid to give that applauſe to another, which he knew how to excell in his own writings. *Cicero*, my Lord, had read him; and *Cicero* diſtinguiſhes him as an Orator. No eloquence, ſays that great judge of eloquence, has ever pleaſed me like that of *Herodotus*: nothing is ſo alluring, ſo gentle, and ſo ſtrong; ſo raviſhing, and ſo convincing. In this Hiſtorian, ſays the ſame great Author in another place, there is nothing of that harſhneſs which offends in many of the Proſe Writers: the ſoft ſtyle glides along like the ſtill clear ſtream of ſome deep river, keeping its courſe uninterruptedly along, and every where alike. It is this Author alſo, my Lord, who gave *Herodotus* the honourable title of Father of Hiſtory: not for his antiquity, but for his excellence. Although he is the earlieſt Proſe Writer we are acquainted

acquainted with, there were some extant in *Cicero*'s time, who wrote before him: it was therefore for his excellence and superiority alone, that he bestowed upon him that distinction.

You will know, my Lord, what you ought to think of that Writer whom *Cicero* calls, the first and greatest of Historians; and whom *Longinus* declares to be of all men that had ever written the most like to the divine *Homer*.

You will read *Herodotus*, my dear Lord, with the greater pleasure, from that taste which you have for poetry: it is not only in his management of his matter, his figures, his ornaments of speech, his embellishments, and his digressions, made for the sake of introducing that infinite variety for which he is so conspicuous; it is not in these alone that he resembles *Homer*. *Herodotus* has not only the imagination and inventive fancy of a Poet, but a great deal of his harmony. There is a softness and delicacy in his disposition of words; a roundness and fulness in his periods; a judicious variation in the length of their several constituent parts; their members, my Lord, *Grammarians* would call them, and a flowing ease and smoothness through the whole, that distinguishes him by many degrees from all the other Prose Writers. The Ionic Dialect, in which he has written, favours this beautiful smoothness, and gives peculiar grace to many passages.

You have heard me mention, my Lord, what I believe few have understood; a middle something between prose and verse, under the name of

of measured prose. I gave you *Isocrates*, as the great master of it; but when I called him the inventer of it as an art, and the first of all Writers who had laboured it, I hinted at some Authors who had by nature done something of that which he accomplished upon rules. Of these, the principal is *Herodotus*. I would not talk thus to a school-boy; but at your time, and with your judgment, my Lord, read a page in *Isocrates*, and acquaint yourself perfectly with the proportions and quantity of syllables, and the whole form of the measured periods of that elaborate Writer; then turn to an equal portion of *Herodotus*, and read him with the same attention; you will be amazed to see what a resemblance: you will distinguish indeed, the greater precision of *Isocrates*, but though more accuracy be in the one, you will perceive as much music in the other: nor should I omit to add, that as the Historian depended only on his ear, and was tied to no rules, you will find beauties of this kind, in some of his passages, too bold for rule, but superior to all the regulated cadencies of the Orator.

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I DON'T know, my Lord, how far it would be justifiable, or how far practicable, to compare *Herodotus*, with the other Prince of *Grecian* History, *Thucydides*. They are too great to suffer any other of the numerous Writers of that nation, who had followed the same plan to come into the list with them; but to determine between them is less easy. They are writers, although upon the same subject, yet of a perfectly different stamp: they seem, indeed, to have placed the excellence of historical writing in a different

different light; and therefore, as each has purſued it on his own plan, and in his own way, they will be differently received by readers of different turns; and each, according to the temper and the peculiar diſpoſition of thoſe who make the judgment, will alternately have the preference. The warm, the ſanguine, and the buſy, will prefer *Thucydides*; the fire, the ſpirit, and the conciſeneſs that runs through his whole works, will captivate and hurry them along, from fact to fact, from incident to incident; and place no ſtops in their way who would think nothing agreeable that interfered in their courſe. On the contrary, thoſe who read for entertainment as well as information; who are not for having wonderful events crowded one upon another, but would receive them as they happen in the world, intermingled with matters of leſs importance, though as pleaſureable; thoſe who have fancy and imagination to take in more than one entertainment at a time; and would ſtop upon a journey to admire the verdure of a meadow; or turn out of their way to examine the ruins of ſome noble building: theſe are the people who will admire *Herodotus*; and as much as the buſy ſpirits prefer, ſo much will theſe depreſs *Thucydides* below him. I ſhall not diſpute the ſtrength or eloquence of *Thucydides*; they are greater, and more exalted, than any thing *Herodotus* has to boaſt; but then the ſweetneſs and the delicacy of *Herodotus* admit no parallel: nothing can be ſo great as *Thucydides* in his harangues; nothing can be ſo ſweet as *Herodotus* in his deſcriptions: and there is this peculiar happineſs attending them, that the Attic, the dialect of *Thucydides*, was as appropriated to fire and

and ſpirit, and dignity, and all the elevated, as the Ionic of *Herodotus* to all the ſoft and the enchanting ſenſations. It was the talent of *Thucydides*, to work upon the paſſions; *Herodotus* rather aims at entertaining the fancy, than ſubduing or captivating the heart: *Thucydides* is, if you will allow the expreſſion, my Lord, an oratorial, *Herodotus* a poetical Hiſtorian; there are ſpeeches in the former, equal to any thing in the *Grecian* Orators, *Demoſthenes* alone excepted; and many that come near even him. *Herodotus* ſeems to have thought theſe no part of hiſtory; on the contrary, there are in him, deſcriptions that are equal to all the elegant and finiſhed images of *Homer*; and theſe *Thucydides* ſeems to have deſpiſed, as interruptions to the thread of the narration. We muſt allow grandeur to *Thucydides*; but no man ever equalled *Herodotus*, in the appropriation of his terms, his copious language, his ſmooth elegance, or his perſuaſive graces. Theſe were his own; and if we allow the pathetic to ſhare the praiſe of oratory with the ſublime, there is yet a foundation on which the prize in this contention may be given to *Herodotus*. His attacks are upon the ſofter rather than the greater paſſions: it is not often that he attempts theſe, but where he does he always ſucceeds. *Thucydides* makes infinitely more attempts in this kind! he is glorioufly ſucceſsful in ſome of them, but he ſometimes fails. There may be differences in the ſentiment, according to the various faſhion and cuſtom of the times; but certainly to us he ſeems ſometimes to miſs his intent in the moſt palpable manner.

I MUST not leave the character of *Herodotus*, my dear Lord, with you under the ſuſpicion of his having nothing of grandeur, nor any well judged ſpeeches. Though he has leſs of theſe things than *Thucydides*, he does not want them: it were poſſible to have leſs than he, and yet to have a great deal of both. There are ſpeeches and harangues in this author; and although it muſt be confeſſed that they have not the exalted eloquence, nor the cloſe and ſolid reaſoning which aſtoniſh and convince in thoſe which *Thucydides* has put into the mouths of his heroes, yet they are all of them elegant, and moſt of them perſuaſive: and, which is no little praiſe, there is not one of them that could have been put into the mouth of any character except that from which it proceeds, nor any ſentiment of it that might not be expected from that. The ſcope and intent of his work is alſo great and noble in the higheſt degree. The original plan was the writing the wars of the *Perſians* againſt the *Greeks*: the intent to ſhew the ſuperiority on the *Grecian* ſide: the leſſon every where inculcated, and it is every where done nobly, is, That unanimity among leſſer ſtates is the great means of preſerving them from falling a prey to greater; that the ſtrength of an army conſiſts more in its diſcipline, than in its numbers; and that courage which is ſufficient to undertake hazards, provided they are not too diſproportioned or unneceſſary, for in either of the caſes it aſſumes a new name, raſhneſs, is able alſo to ſucceed in the attempt.

THIS

THIS was the plan and scope of the father of history; and he has executed it nobly. If he has tied himself less down to the succession of time in his relations, than an accuracy in the arrangement of his facts may seem to have required, he has attoned for it by a connexion of another kind, that of the similar nature of the events. He has not violated the tenour of chronology, though he has displaced its articles: and whenever he has broke in upon the thread, he has attoned for it by a beauty.

You will permit me, my dear Lord, to except against your judging of the character I have given you of *Herodotus*, from any thing you may find in that popular treatise, his Life of *Homer*. A few pages will convince you that, although printed with his works, and honoured with his name, it is not his. There is in it nothing of that elegance and smoothness, nothing of that variety and beauty, nothing of that measured cadence that we meet with in his history. The judgments in many parts are false, the observations in a number of others trivial; and the very time of the Poet's living not only different from all that we receive as truth, but even different from what *Herodotus* himself has established in his history. It is infamous that a piece in itself so mean, should be fathered upon so great a name: you will judge of the whole, my Lord, very equally, if you determine from the setting out: what you shall say of the author, whosoever he was, you will not find difficult to ascertain, where you find him attempting to pass for *Herodotus*, with all the dry harshness and inelegance of a low Critic; and betraying by his con-

contradiction, that he had not even read the Author. If it were any other *Herodotus* of a different period, any man really of the divine Hiſtorian's name, who publiſhed this little, this pitiful piece, the compilers have done no credit to their judgment, who added it to the works of that Author: if, as I rather ſuſpect, my Lord, it has been the workmanſhip of ſome pedant, who had the vanity and ignorance to think he could paſs it upon the world for the writing of that great genius, by prefixing his name to it, it is pity, we do not know his that deſerves the brand of diſingenuity and folly. The applauſe which *Herodotus* received on his public recitation of his work, raiſed up *Thucydides* as a rival: but what could induce this attempt upon his fame, it would not be eaſy to determine?

FROM the gentle, the eaſy, and the diffuſe *Herodotus*, my Lord, I would recommend it to you to paſs to the warm, the nervous, and the conciſe *Thucydides*. They are perfect contraſts, but they will explain and elucidate one another. You will find between them, all that can be done in hiſtory; and I am ſorry to ſay, that after you have read them, in their language, the other Hiſtorians in all languages, except the *Roman*, will make but a poor figure. I have mentioned *Thucydides*, as the rival of *Herodotus*; and you will find him, my Lord, elaborately ſo. I wiſh I could excuſe him from being invidious in ſome paſſages, and almoſt diſingenuous with regard to him in others; in all reſpects beſide, he is the great pattern of true emulation; and might be produced to your

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Lordſhip, as the firſt of all inſtances in what manner the greatneſs and the applauſe of one man of genius may be the ſpurs to greatneſs in another. There is no doubt of his having levelled at the Author whom he envied all thoſe reflexions which he ſeems to beſtow as general, upon the compilers of hiſtory who had admitted fable amidſt truth; nor can any one be blind to the cenſure he levelled at *Herodotus*, when he condemned with ſo much diſreſpect thoſe who, under the name of Hiſtorians, made it their purpoſe to divert and entertain, rather than to inſtruct the reader. There was no foundation for the firſt of theſe ſeverities, and for the laſt, I think the manner of the Author, who was the concealed ſubject of it, rather a beauty, and a merit, than any thing to be condemned.

SEPARATE this little rancour from *Thucydides*, my Lord, and you will find him an excellent example of worthy emulation: he ſaw *Herodotus* honoured by all *Greece* for a work, the execution of which he found might have been his own; he perceived talents equal to all the applauſe that happier man had obtained by employing them; and he determined to deſerve it by the ſame road. You are not to wonder, my dear Lord, if you find *Thucydides* ſuperior to *Herodotus*, in many parts of the character of an Hiſtorian: he had the advantage of his example. He ſtood upon the ſhoulders of the giant; and he took in an ampler field of obſervation. He had attended to the excellencies and to the imperfections of his rival: it is this that will make one Writer of uſe to another; not the ſetting him up at all events as a model. He ſaw where he ap-

approved him; and he marked down those passages as his peculiar subjects of imitation. He observed also with an attentive eye, his errors, or what appeared such to him; and these he as carefully noted, under the character of what he should avoid. This was not all. He had more than the common advantage of reading his Author, he heard him repeat his works before a numerous and a judicious assembly: he had the opportunity of adding their judgments to his own: he saw where they applauded and approved; he observed when they were silent, or where they shook the head. Applause was his aim: it was not so much his point to deserve, as to obtain it. If he had disputed their judgments, he would have wrote according to them; and he had the singular advantage of writing without the partialities of an Author, to his own works.

THUS it is, my Lord, that I would have every Writer use the works of those who have gone before him: not servilely as a Copyist, but judiciously as a Critic: not setting them up as a perfect model, but clearly distinguishing their beauties and their faults; and profiting of avoiding of the one, as much as of an imitation of the other. It is thus, my Lord, to ascend from lesser to much greater things, that I would recommend to your Lordship's consideration, the harangues of those who are most attended to, and most respected in that most honourable of all assemblies to which your birth and rank give you a right; and in which the virtues of your father will call the eyes of all who remember that great and good man upon you. As *Thucydides*

des heard *Herodotus*, ſo, my Lord, do you liſten to them. I know the goodneſs of your heart too well to think it neceſſary to ſay, Throw away the rancour and the envy which blotted his intentions. The one cannot find admittance into your breaſt, the others place will be ſupplied by emulation. This, is in great minds, what envy is in little ones. Attend, my Lord, to the harangues of thoſe who are, and who deſerve to be, reſpected. Obſerve their beauties without envy, and obſerve their faults without triumph. You will then have all the advantages of the *Grecian*; and none of his blemiſhes will affect you. You will be all that is great of *Thucydides*; and you will be no more of him.

YOU will find the obſervation which I have made, as to the uſe to which that Hiſtorian employed the other, almoſt unneceſſary, as you read him after you have left the other. Different as their ſtyle and manner are, you will ſee the latter copying every grace of the former; and when I have opportunity of being particular, I ſhall not find it difficult to ſhew you ſome of the moſt pompous harangues in *Thucydides*, riſing from the ſimple and unaffected ſpeeches of *Herodotus*. But it was not in this light that his model was of greateſt uſe to him: the advantages he made of his excellencies, was nothing to that which he drew from his faults. Theſe were ſuch, as it was moſt likely a great genius ſhould fall into; and theſe *Thucydides* placed in a light of ſo much horror, that he perfectly avoided them. Indeed his ſtudied elegance in oppoſition to thoſe things which were moſt culpable in *Herodotus*, is not to be examined without

without ſeeing the ſame invidious view in it as in the reſt, even as in his cenſures. While he ſhewed the excellence which ſtood in oppoſition to his faults, he at once obtained a fame encreaſed by the compariſon of the deficiencies of another revered great Author; and he ſet thoſe blemiſhes or defects in the moſt conſpicuous light.

WHILE we blame and condemn this temper in *Thucydides*, we are to acknowledge that the world has profited by it. Had he hated *Herodotus* leſs, he would have been leſs great. This paſſion gave a new ſpur to all his powers. If he thought the manner of *Herodotus* cold in ſome places, it is to that we owe the univerſal ſpirit and true warmth of oratory that ſhines in his. If *Herodotus* ſuffered in the opinion of ſome as too prolix, it was the point with *Thucydides* to correct his fancy, and even ſacrifice beauties to conciſeneſs. How different, my Lord, is this from the preſent method of uſing an Author as a model. If you at this time ſee one book written on the plan of another, they are as like as poſſible. You accuſe the imitator as a plagiary; on the other hand, with theſe geniuſes of old time, the man who intended to build his fame on that of his predeceſſor, in the ſame way which he made his work the ſubject of all his obſervations, became more unlike in avoiding the errors, than like in imitating the beauties; and the work was not by a vulgar eye ſeen to have had any advantage from the other.

I HAVE given you, my Lord, grandeur and ſpirit, as the character of *Thucydides*. It is not a little of this dignity that he owes to figures. His

His uſe of them is bold in the higheſt degree; but ſo happy a judgment tempered his fire, that they are always juſtifiable; and even here the great Hiſtorian who went before him, ſerved in the purpoſe, not of imitation, but contrariety. There is a ſoftneſs and delicacy in the figures of that Writer, which *Thucydides*, in his uſual way of finding faults in him, accuſed of being languid; and it was in diſtinction from theſe, that he laboured after all that grandeur, majeſty, and ſpirit, which we ſee in his.

My Lord, it is of importance to you, to know that one vaſt advantage in point of ſpirit, which *Thucydides* poſſeſſed, above the others, was youth. He, who does not begin, who at leaſt does not plan out and prepare for his deſign, while the vigour of that ſtate ſupports and warms him; though he may have all the ſober greatneſs in the world, will not equal thoſe who have taken that opportunity in point of ſpirit. Your Lordſhip is at that period, when the deſign of all your future greatneſs, for I flatter myſelf with a proſpect of much of it, is to be laid: the Claſſics will give you not only the materials, but the true turn of thinking. I know, by your commands to me upon this ſubject, that you will not neglect them; and the whole colour of your future life, depends on the advantage. *Thucydides*, my Lord, was juſt at your time of life, when he heard *Herodotus* recite his hiſtory at the olympic games. As the Hiſtorian ſpoke, he coloured, he trembled, he could not keep his place: when the aſſembly applauded, he burſt into tears, when he was cenſured for the emotions which declared emulation, and

with it ſome degree of envy, *Herodotus* reconciled him to his father: he told him it was thus a great genius uſed to diſcloſe itſelf: he palliated the faulty part, while he did honour to the ſpirit of the reception which his works had met with. He preſaged what happened, that the youth who envied would hereafter rival him; and with a ſpirit very different from that of the modern times, preſſed his father to give him all encouragements and opportunities. But I ſhould remember that I am writing the ſtory of *Thucydides*, not of *Herodotus*: I wiſh he who is my proper ſubject, had given me opportunity of praiſing him in equal terms on the event. He was as much a modern in his heart, as he was an antient in his head, his work deſerves to be immortal, but his motives were not of the nobleſt kind.

I HAVE obſerved, that in all things *Thucydides* attempted to build a reputation on the foundation of the deficiencies and imperfections of *Herodotus*: wherever that Writer erred, or wherever the world thought him in the leaſt wrong, *Thucydides* took the advantage of calling in the contrary excellence: I have already inſtanced this, my Lord, in his ſtyle, his whole manner, and his uſe of figures. The whole conduct and ſcope of his work, carry the ſame character. *Herodotus* had taken in too much; *Thucydides* limits himſelf in narrower bounds: inſtead of a hiſtory of the *Greeks* and *Barbarians*, he confines himſelf to the *Athenian* and *Peloponeſian* War. In this, however, he is not perfect, death ſurpriſed him in the time when he was writing the Hiſtory of the twenty-firſt year of that War: it laſted twenty-ſeven, ſo

that

that there are six years of which we have no account. Even the book which comes last, the sixth, for it is not that the Author intended should have been the last, you will find imperfect and unfinished.

I DON'T know, my Lord, that you will any where meet with a greater instance of the necessity of correction and a studied revise, than in this sixth book of *Thucydides*. I would wish you, my Lord, to read it with great attention: but it must not be till after you have gone through all the others with a perfect care. Those who have but casually passed their eye over the five first books, will be ready to declare the sixth not of the same Author; but I know otherwise of your judgment. It is greatly inferior to the rest, more so indeed than the writing of some other of the *Greek* Historians, who are very little esteemed in comparison of him, but you will find it his. There is the same fire in it, but there is a cloud of smoak: the same landschapes would discloſe themselves, but a fog interposes its vapour between. These are the first appearances of all great writings, my Lord; be not discouraged when you see them in your own. Confusion and perplexity appear in the first copies of all great pieces: genius alone has been in those consulted, judgment is to come in, to retrench, to elucidate, to strengthen, and to dispose. Conciseness is one of the great characters of *Thucydides*; but there are in some parts of this, passages which are prolix. He had not time to make them shorter. Had he revised, he would have retrenched. Another great characteristic of his writings, is purity of language.

Tully has praiſed him for it: you know then he deſerves that praiſe. With all the fire and fury, all the ſtrength, and all the impetuoſity of that Writer, ſays the *Roman* Orator, there is propriety and perfect chaſtity of expreſſion. While he ſounds the alarm, while he blows the trumpet and puſhes on his heroes, amongſt, againſt, and after, the legions of their oppoſing or their flying adverſaries, all his hurry never throws him from his guard; but with the full buſtle of confuſion, he is as accurate as in his cooleſt ſentiments. This accuracy, this purity of ſtyle, this choice of words and ſtudied propriety of expreſſion, ſo much the diſtinguiſhing character of the Writer on other occaſions, are not found here. You will ſee, my Lord, words that you would have diſplaced; but he would have diſplaced them too. In ſhort, you ſee here, my Lord, the rough draught of a work of the greateſt Writer in his way among the *Greeks*: can there be a finer opportunity of improving your own talents, than the diſtinguiſhing his imperfections, and from the general tenour of his other writings, gueſſing how he would have ſupplied them; the marking his errors and conſidering in what manner he would have amended them.

You will be more pleaſed, my Lord, with *Herodotus*, but you will be more affected by *Thucydides*. After *Demoſthenes*, whoſe immediate province was oratory, there is no Orator ſo powerful. He has, in common with that ſurpriſing ſpeaker, the art of intereſting all who read him, as if themſelves were concerned in the event: no man ever had ſuch a command either of his own paſſions or thoſe of other people. Whatſoever

ever those of whom he speaks must have felt, he feels under the same circumstances; and what-soever passion he calls up in himself, he communicates to his reader. You are not an observer; you are interested, you are concerned in all that he relates: you do not read the story of a long past time: the things of which he writes are about you, and you find yourself made a part of the company. If his figures do this in the general conduct of his work, his hurry in description, his haste from place to place, from incident to incident, his lively images of all things, do it in parts where others would have thought nothing more was to be attempted than mere narration. The whole tenour of his style is noble in the highest degree; there is an air of dignity, of sublimity, and grandeur in every part of him, that is not to be found in any other Historian. He seems indeed, to have looked on History in a different light from that in which it had been seen by all that went before him. He is bold in his expression as the professed Orators. His metaphors are daring to a great degree, but they are never extravagant. He had genius in the most exalted degree; and he had judgment equal to it: to this is owing, that he is at once great and correct, and excels the several Writers who had gone before him each in his own way. I will not say that he has all that musical harmony which we meet with in *Herodotus*. He is more impetuous, and it would less have suited with his manner but in the warmer parts; as it is observed that people when in a passion naturally speak in a kind of measure, he has, whether it be from nature or art, a great deal of the merit of that measured Prose so eminent in *Isocrates*.

His conciſeneſs is univerſal: it takes place in his buſieſt as well as in his cooleſt ſcenes, and it is very beautiful. There is a nervous force in his manner which he oppoſed to the beautiful prolixity of *Herodotus*, which no other manner of writing can have: it is to this, in a great meaſure, that he owes the peculiar vigour of his harangues; and it is to this he owes that perfect purity of his expreſſion. No other form of ſpeaking would have been ſuited to his ſentiments: his peculiar way of thinking could have been expreſſed by no other; his cloſe reaſon would have languiſhed under a multiplicity of words; his clear conception would have been obſcured by them. Art and nature joined in him to ſtrike off all redundancy; and he has, of all men, moſt accompliſhed their deſigns.

You will admire, my Lord, the harangues in *Thucydides*, as much as any thing in the great, the perſuaſive *Demoſthenes:* you will like them better becauſe they are ſhorter: and you will be convinced how much the Author was in the right to make them ſo, when you find, as that will be in general the caſe, the ſhorteſt even of theſe ſhort ones, the moſt animated and the moſt affecting. You muſt not wonder, my dear Lord, that I often mention *Demoſthenes*, on the account of his likeneſs to this Author. *Demoſthenes* formed himſelf upon *Thucydides*. As he has adopted all the beauties of *Herodotus*, *Demoſthenes* has formed himſelf upon *Thucydides*, he has every where tranſcribed his manner; and it is no exaggerated compliment to the Hiſtorian to ſay, that where the Orator is moſt like him, he is moſt excellent.

You

YOU have read the *Engliſh* Claſſic, the Lord *Bolingbroke*, on the Study of Hiſtory: I know you have read him with approbation. I alſo have done ſo: I have a ſenſe of all his perfections, few people have more: yet I, who perhaps am faulty in the almoſt veneration I profeſs for *Bolingbroke*, tell you, my Lord, that you will acquire a more juſt taſte for what is true Hiſtory from one book of *Thucydides*, than from all this noble Author has written on the ſubject: you have at once the example and the precept; and you have both in a perfection no where elſe to be found. The uſe of Hiſtory, is the giving inſtruction under the form of example. Where will you meet with this executed as by *Thucydides?* You will no where, my Lord, meet with ſuch a ſeries of leſſons of morality ſuited to the greateſt perſons, and delivered in the greateſt manner: yet is there not a ſentence of advice. He makes his heroes ſpeak. Their actions, and the conſequences of them, more than pronounce, they point the ſeries of events that muſt attend a ſimilar conduct. While they ſhew the ſucceſs, they point out the means by which it was obtained; and while they deſcribe the ruin of ſome great and perhaps good man, they give, in the detail of the occaſion, an admonition that may guard againſt the like misfortune when it threatens under like circumſtances.

YOUR Lordſhip will be apt to aſk in what manner and by what means it was that an Hiſtorian, who took in a ſmaller compaſs than moſt others, who had but a limited number of events to commemorate, and thoſe not of the very greateſt that had ſurpriſed the world, exceeded all others

in the magnificence of his language, and grandeur of his manner? It is not the ſubject, my dear Lord, that makes the Author, or that conſtitutes his manner. The ſubject of the *Iliad* was no more than the anger of an officer in the combined army; but what is it that the Poet has not made it the occaſion of introducing. *Thucydides* has been more reſerved in his conduct, but he has taken in occaſional means of augmenting the ſtory. His natural dignity of thought is one great ſource of that grandeur which aſtoniſhes us in his expreſſion, the other principal ſource of it is his uſe of figures: no man had ſtricter judgment than *Thucydides*, but this with an unconquerable fire of imagination like his, did not ſuppreſs, but encourage the uſe of theſe: he ſaw plainly enough what he might not do; but he alſo ſaw what he might; and he has dared to immortalize himſelf, by things that no man but himſelf, depending on his own judgment againſt the world, would have dared to attempt.

His apoſtrophes have a life and fire that aſtoniſhes. His interrogations are bold and ſpirited, crowded upon one another, and calling conviction upon conviction in the redoubled anſwers. There is not in the whole ſcope of Oratory, any thing that gives greater life, and force, and vehemence to a diſcourſe, than theſe queſtions: and at the ſame time nothing appears ſo natural. No man ever had that perfect command of them that we ſee in *Thucydides*: no man called them in on ſo many occaſions, no man with ſuch ſucceſs. Where a plain and even manner of ſpeaking would have rendered the ſubject poor and languid, he gives it a new

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life and dignity by this manner of expreſſion. His precipitated and vehement interrogations, give him at once all the earneſtneſs of a perſon concerned, and introduce a variety into the diſcourſe, while he anſwers himſelf as if he were another perſon; which, at once, ſtrengthens and enlivens the whole ſubject. The Orator always affects his hearers moſt when he ſeems leaſt to take pains to do it. The natural air that there is in queſtions, extremely familiarizes the diſcourſe; and while it conceals art, has all the advantages of its higheſt effects. Nothing can paint the paſſions ſo well as theſe interrogations; nothing awakens the attention of the reader like them. Are not you more earneſt, my Lord, in this ſingle point, than in all the former diſquiſitions? I know you are; and you have an inſtance of the truth of the aſſertion that makes all others needleſs.

ISOCRATES, whom I have mentioned to you, my Lord, as a great pattern of Oratory, is remarkable for his regularity, and accurate punctualneſs in the minuteſt reſpects: you will not find a prepoſition out of its place, nor an expletive wanting, where either uſe or harmony could have demanded it. There is beauty in this, but, my dear Lord, there is more beauty often in the abſence of it. The removing the connections, often gives a new life and fire to the ſubject; and, where the matter is hurried, communicates a peculiar ſpirit. No man is ſo happy in this as *Thucydides*. You find it every where in his buſieſt ſcenes, and it every where gives a new force and ſpirit.

OF all the figures, the Hyperbaton is the moſt commanding, but it is at the ſame time the moſt difficult and the moſt dangerous: few have dared to attempt a frequent uſe of it, and of thoſe few moſt have failed. It is in *Thucydides* that we ſee this bold figure in all its beauty, none has uſed it ſo often, none has uſed it ſo daringly, and yet he is always happy; you never call him raſh though always bold in this tranſpoſition of not only words but thoughts out of the natural method and order of diſcourſe. You often tremble for him, but he never trembles for himſelf: his reader is often loſt, at leaſt, my Lord, it requires more than the capacity of a common reader, to avoid being loſt in the uſe he makes of this figure; but you ſoon diſtinguiſh that he was never loſt himſelf; and you honour him for the deviations which ſeemed unnatural, and for that boldneſs that almoſt miſled you. There is not any figure equal to this for the natural expreſſion of paſſions when at their height. It has been obſerved, that all people when they are in anger ſpeak blank verſe: it is equally true, that people tranſported by the violence of any paſſion, be it what it will, make uſe of this figure in their diſcourſe. While the mind and imagination are under the influence of theſe paſſions, the diſcourſe is confuſed, its ſeveral parts are miſplaced, things foreign to the ſubject are brought in; and from one intent they muſt run to another, from that to a third, and from the laſt back to the firſt again without order or method. This is what the inconſtancy of nature does under the ſtrong influence of any paſſion; and this *Thucydides* had ſtudied and has imitated. Whenever he is to in-

introduce a man disturbed by these emotions, his discourse is immethodical, wild, and appears at first confused: sentiment crowds upon sentiment opposite to one another, a second resolution takes place of the first; and things foreign to the argument alienate from them all. This is *Thucydides*'s description of a passion; and this is the Hyperbaton in its supremest excellence; in this only, art and nature differ: nature often loses and quite confounds herself, but on the contrary, art which has none of her real disturbances, though it affects them all, remembers to come back in time and in order, and so regulates every circumstance that all shall concur at last, notwithstanding their seeming wildness. This is the address by which *Thucydides* brings every thing immediately before the eye of his reader; all that he describes is there transacting, and every speech by this address wears the face not of a laboured or of a studied harangue. The Critics have accused this Author of too many of these figures; they say, he surfeits his readers with them. Drop they the cresf which they had raised upon the censure of the great man: they have translated it from *Longinus*; and your Lordship, when you have read the Author, I am assured will dare, as I do, to think *Longinus* is in the wrong. It is true, my Lord, that you will find a great many of these figures, but it is as true, that you will wish there were more: you will see him, my Lord, leading you through a thousand intricacies and meanders, and alienating you by foreign thoughts, and fatiguing your imagination by long transpositions, suspending his original thought with a studied irregularity: you will be in pain for him; you will begin to

he fixed with the wound he has dealt you but just at that instant, for he knows when the reader will begin to flag, he all of a sudden, and at once, falls into his first thought; and the danger in which you thought him, adds to the strength and beauty of the discourse.

You will, throughout the whole History of *Thucydides*, my Lord, find that you are reading of exploits in the language of a man, who could have performed them. You see, throughout the whole work, the man of gallantry and figure; and without being told I dare assure myself, your Lordship would have distinguished that the stories of the wars, are told by one who was himself a general. There is something that a man of rank adopts from the whole course of his education, from the precepts of his governors, and from the sentiments of those about him, which afterwards communicates an air of dignity and grandeur to his whole life; and this is not any other way to be acquired: you see this, my Lord, in every part of *Thucydides*. There is in the most remote things also a way of discovering a man's general knowledge. Although *Thucydides* no where professedly plays the Philosopher, it is easy to read throughout that he was informed of all the discoveries of his time. You are acquainted, my Lord, with the tenets of the reverenced, the worthily reverenced *Anaxagoras*: you will find *Thucydides* also informed of them, and need not to be told that he was his disciple. You will see in many of his sentiments a friend of *Socrates*; and when you have arrived so far as the account of his master in Oratory, *Antiphon*, you will have seen so many excellencies of the

scholars, that you will not doubt any thing which he relates of the fountain of his own eloquence.

You will not wonder, my dear Lord, that I pass from *Thucydides* to *Xenophon*: you will not wonder, that after the great deal that I have written to you, on the character of the latter, I still say much of him whom I am now going to consider. When I have named him, I have mentioned the great and eminent among the *Grecian* Historians; and a shorter observation will be all that I need give you of the others.

I HAVE set *Herodotus*, my dear Lord, before all the other Historians in point of elegance; and *Thucydides* before them all in point of strength. *Xenophon* is of a turn different from both, yet excellent as either. His character is plainness. In the place of the diffuse beauty of the one, and of the laboured conciseness and nervous Oratory of the other, there is an unaffected simplicity in the general turn of *Xenophon*, which pleases as much as the one, and convinces with equal force with the other. With this plainness of *Xenophon*'s language, there is joined all the perspicuity that ever did honour to a Writer. He is pure and chaste in his expression beyond all men; and there is a native sweetness in his manner, and something pleasing and agreeable, which it is in vain to seek elsewhere. There are passages in which he has been supposed to imitate *Herodotus*: you will distinguish them, my Lord, without my pointing them out to you; but I shall presume to anticipate your judgment concerning them. I know that you will

will not call them ſervile imitations of his original, for they are not ſuch, although wordy Critics have ſtigmatiſed them with that name. The two great Writers, in his own way, who went before him, were *Thucydides* and *Herodotus*: it was natural that he ſhould read theſe; and the reſpect which all *Greece* ſhewed them at that time, made it as natural for him to eſtabliſh his manner upon what he ſaw moſt pleaſing or moſt great in them. You will eaſily perceive, my Lord, that he never liked the ſtyle of *Thucydides*: his natural turn made him an enemy to thoſe bold flights and lofty images with which that Writer abounds: he found *Herodotus* a Writer more in his own way, he ſtudied him, he adopted his taſte and his manner; and he wrote like him without copying him. *Xenophon*, my Lord, has employed *Herodotus*, as I would have your Lordſhip employ *Herodotus* and *Xenophon*, and all the reſt; he has underſtood him well, he has ſeen what are his excellencies; and he has ſo perfectly maſtered his manner, that he can, when it is proper, write like him without having immediate recourſe to any part of him as an original. This, my dear Lord, is the true uſe men are to make of the Claſſics: it is thus they made uſe of one another: would you have a better example?

WHEN I have mentioned the plainneſs, and unadorned, as well as unaffected, ſimplicity of *Xenophon*'s language, you are not to underſtand me, my Lord, as confining myſelf to that article for his praiſe; that is his characteriſtic, that his great and peculiar merit, but *Xenophon* has many excellencies. You are not to imagine,

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my Lord, that this distinguished and determined plainness of his language, excluded the use of figures: far otherwise, no man has used them more happily. The figures in *Xenophon* are not so frequent as in many Writers, but they are always appropriated, and introduced with a peculiar grace: the several Orators of old time, as they knew the strength of their own talents, and were sufficiently sensible where their force lay, have always called in that peculiar figure which most suited with their turn the most frequently. As force and spirit were the prevailing beauties in *Thucydides*, he made the Hyperbaton his favourite point, bold, laboured, and astonishing on the other hand, as the character of *Xenophon* is ease and simplicity; he has preferred those figures which appeared most natural, most simple, and had least of all the look of such. All that *Thucydides* has been able to atchieve by those finished and elaborate figures, the easy *Xenophon* has arrived at by the modest metaphor, and by a yet more familiar and unsuspected figure the change of time. It is owing to this, my Lord, though very few have discovered it, that all the descriptions of this Historian are pictures, that we see in him what we read in others; and every thing is, instead of being related, brought before us. You will find many, very many places, my Lord, in this Author, in which, by the simple address of changing the tense of the verb, a narration is exalted and enlivened into an image; and what would otherwise have been a cold and lifeless narration, becomes the immediate and affecting scene acted before you.

My Lord, you will know what rank a Writer ought to hold in your esteem, whom his co-

cotemporaries diſtinguiſhed with peculiar praiſes; who was honoured in the moſt ſingular manner by thoſe who lived at a time when the ſubjects of which he wrote were recent in the memory; and the language in which he wrote was in its perfection. I reverence the Critics of old, for their praiſe of that ſimplicity which few who have written ſince their time, have known how to imitate, the beauties of which few have known how to reliſh. You will find hardly any opportunity equal to the character which different Writers gave of this Hiſtorian, for the diſcovery of the truth I have juſt now advanced, that few have capacity to comprehend the beauties of ſimplicity. Many of the *Greek* Writers give *Xenophon* the loweſt place among the Hiſtorians of their nation; and even *Dionyſius Halicarneſſenſis*, places him at a great diſtance below *Herodotus*. Compariſons are invidious and fooliſh; and they are no where ſo much ſo as amongſt Authors. Each of theſe had his merit different from, and by no means an object of compariſon with, that of the other; but, my Lord, the end to which I have commemorated theſe cenſures which have been paſſed upon *Xenophon*, was to ſet them againſt that enthuſiaſtic rapture, with which *Quintillian* tells us, *that the graces with their own hands, poured ſweetneſs upon every thing he wrote*; and with that general voice of *Greece* that called him the *Athenian* Muſe. What are we to ſay, my Lord, upon ſuch differences of opinion, unleſs that which I have already obſerved, and which I meant to elucidate and evince by this example; that many are judges of a laboured expreſſion, few of the native beauties of ſimplicity.

I HAVE observed to you, the simplicity of *Xenophon* was adorned with elegance and sweetness, but it has yet a farther praise, variety; he treats of a multiplicity of things, and those different in the highest degree from one another. His language has not that sameness under these occasions which is so much a disgrace to those who pretend to style and language at this time: had he been alike in all these parts, he must have been absurd in many; but he is varied throughout the whole. He has his peculiar manner for the great and the mere trivial concerns; for the highest enterprises and the most familiar conversations: no man has more beautifully adapted his style to his several subjects, and yet in all there is this same elegant ease and beautiful simplicity; whether he is august in talking of great things, or familiar in lesser, there is still the same clear order, the same persuasive and enchanting ease in his language; the words flow easily after one another as if it were common conversation, and yet they are every where as appropriated, and the whole as correct, as in that Panegyric which cost *Isocrates* ten years.

IT is not only in the style of *Xenophon*, my Lord, that we admire this perfect order and elegant simplicity. His matter is as well disposed as are his words: he seems of all Writers to have had the cleareſt head; and I may add, my Lord, the best heart. You will esteem him as highly as you love him. He seems to have laid down the whole thread of his composition at once in his mind, and have seen in one long chain, all the events he was to commemorate, disposed

diſpoſed link by link with perfect regularity. You will not wonder, my Lord, that an Author, thus prepared for his taſk is never confuſed. Things were in method in his imagination, and he called them out in order as he wanted them. You will have read *Thucydides*, before you look into him, my Lord, and it is neceſſary that it ſhould be ſo. You will find him taking up the *Grecian* Hiſtory, where the other drops it; and will continue the ſtory tho' you have changed your Author. You are not to wonder, my Lord, at theſe Authors ſo naturally ſucceeding one another: *Thucydides*'s work, though then unpubliſhed, fell into the hands of *Xenophon*; and it is to him we owe the publication: that *Thucydides* had written was a thing well known; and the ſubject on which he had written was alſo as well known: nor were thoſe who longed to ſee the works of a perſon they ſo much reverenced, ignorant into whoſe hands they had fallen; it would therefore have been impoſſible for *Xenophon*, had he deſired it, to have publiſhed them as his own; but this is evident, he might have ſuppreſſed them, and that he did not is a proof that he did not dread the rival.

I HAVE mentioned the natural turn of *Xenophon* to eaſe, as a reaſon why he did not form himſelf upon *Thucydides*; but there is yet another obvious reaſon: the world would have been ready to charge him with having formed himſelf by imitation on the Author whoſe works he publiſhed, and whoſe ſtory he continued; and when your Lordſhip ſhall have had ſome more experience of mankind, you will think it not impoſſible

impoſſible, that the dread of ſuch an imputation has made *Xenophon* as labouredly unlike *Thucydides* as that Author to *Herodotus*.

THOUGH I might here diſmiſs the conſideration of *Xenophon* as an Hiſtorian, there is yet another light in which we are to conſider him, and under which he makes at leaſt as eminent and as amiable a figure; this is that of the Philoſopher and Moraliſt. In this capacity he excells as greatly as in Hiſtory; nor can I determine in which your Lordſhip will the moſt admire him. Beſide the tranſactions of near fifty years immediately following thoſe of which *Thucydides* had written, we owe to this Writer an elegant and intereſting relation of the enterpriſes of the younger *Cyrus* againſt *Artaxerxes*, and the famous retreat of the ten thouſand *Greeks*. This retreat more celebrated than many victories, and more deſervedly celebrated, could have been deſcribed by none ſo properly as *Xenophon*, for he conducted after he had adviſed that ſtep. In this and in many other parts of his works, we find him, like *Cæſar*, his own commentator, relating events which had fallen under his own eye, and in which himſelf was concerned in the moſt capital manner; and, I don't well know whether I ſhall be underſtood to compliment the *Greek* or the *Roman*, in ſaying it; but I think there is a great ſameneſs in their ſtyle on theſe occaſions.

NEITHER of theſe, however, is what I was about to mention in this place: when I celebrated *Xenophon* as a Philoſopher and a Moraliſt, you will know, my Lord, that I have his *Cyro-*

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pædia in view. This, you are to look upon as a very peculiar and very noble romance. It is not wholly without truth for its foundation; and many of the events recorded in it have truly happened: but although you know that the story of the taking *Babylon* is an historical fact, you will not be induced, by that, to suppose that all the rest of the work is History. The Author did not intend it so. He has drawn together a number of events, some real, some imagined, the purpose of which is to inculcate morals. You will see, my Lord, that the Author's point has been the drawing the character of a great Prince; and if he has complimented the elder *Cyrus* with interweaving many of the greater incidents of his life in the narration, and in a manner by these appropriating the rest: neither did the Author intend, nor will your Lordship receive, the rest as Historical facts.

PERHAPS there never has been a finer method hit upon to inculcate the moral precepts, than this of a figured example. When we see how greatly they become a Prince, how much the highest character is honoured and advanced by them; we cannot but have a respect for them, in some degree proportioned to their real rank and dignity. *Xenophon* gives a number of harangues, a great number; it was the custom, I will not say the fault, of the times. Men establish to themselves some settled ideas of what is the proper character and proper conduct in that species of writing which they set about; and it was the established doctrine of those times, that harangues were an essential part of History. I never have thought *Thucydides* has too many of them,

them, though very frequent because they are so spirited. *Herodotus* never seems to have too many, because they are so elegant; yet, in propriety, perhaps both are faulty in the number. Your Lordship, I am afraid, will find *Xenophon* too full of them. The simplicity of his manner though highly beautiful in general, is not calculated for affecting us in harangues; and when you find him throwing them in also in too great abundance, and on the most trivial and unimportant occasions; you will be the more sensible of that want of spirit and want of decoration that is in them.

My Lord, it was one of my first principles to make the Classics of use to you by all the means that I could; and, amongst these, I promised to point out their faults as well as their beauties; and promised myself as much advantage from them, as from their excellencies. Flaws in diamonds are distinguishable; be they ever so small blemishes in such characters are as visible, that would have been over-looked in all others. Beside impartiality demands it of me. You must not think that I neglect this part of my office because you hear little of it: these were men too accurate to admit of many errors; nor are you to think the worse of those Writers in which you will see me point them out. On the contrary, the greatest of all Writers have the most of them. Men of less genius can avoid errors: there is a mediocrity to which many men can keep, who never rise into beauties nor sink into faults, whereas there is a disregard of little things in the greatest Authors that these never are guilty of. You have seen

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me point out the greateſt number of them among the Orators, in him whom I have called, and whom men to the end of time ſhall call, the greateſt of them all, *Demoſthenes:* if therefore I mention ſome in *Xenophon*, you will not, my Lord, ſuppoſe him therefore a worſe Writer, than thoſe concerning whoſe imperfections I have been ſilent. There is the more room for this as I have praiſed him fully; and in the plan of this deſign, there is the higheſt neceſſity. I am recommending to your Lordſhip, the Claſſics as models on which to form yourſelf, and propoſing them as patterns of a general though not a ſervile imitation. I know your Lordſhip's true taſte will reliſh in a high degree the beauties of that ſimplicity which you will diſtinguiſh in *Xenophon*; but how can I anſwer it to myſelf if I ſhould, by being ſilent, ſuffer his defects alſo to ſtand with you as objects of approbation.

IF I were to be aſked, my Lord, which I preferred, that piece which had no fault, nor ever roſe into any great excellence, or that in which the ſublimeſt beauties were blended with here and there a fault, I ſhould undoubtedly prefer the latter; indeed I muſt either do that or I muſt find no beauty after; where is he who has wrote with genius and without them? but, then my Lord, it is as neceſſary that I diſtinguiſh thoſe faults from thoſe beauties; that I place in their ſeveral ranks thoſe things which it will be an honour to imitate, and thoſe which you ought to avoid, otherwiſe I had better not have written at all. Indeed, my Lord, human excellencies are always attended with their faults, and no where ſo much as in writing. Thoſe who

who have talents for producing the greateſt things, cannot ſtoop to that punctual accuracy which others maintain: they diſregard little faults, while they put down great beauties; and they expect the ſame warmth of imagination in the readers, and make him overlook them. When the genius runs away with the Author, as it always will do with him who is worth reading, he cannot ſtop to take care of every trivial incident; on the contrary, he who never attempts to riſe, it is impoſſible ever ſhould fall; and while he crawls along the heavy road, it is not a wonder that he ſees if a pebble be put with the wrong ſide upwards. Such faults therefore, my Lord, there are, and ſuch there muſt be in every Author who is worth your ſtudying; but it is neceſſary they ſhould be pointed out, when we ſpeak of thoſe Authors with a view to make them uſeful. Let it not therefore appear invidious, my Lord, that I name them. I do not imagine that theſe things, propoſed ſingly and by themſelves, would miſlead your judgment or paſs for beauties, but in the places where they ſtand, they may be of ill conſequence from their authority. The reverence which you have for theſe Authors, may make you ſuſpect your own judgment when it would condemn any thing in them; and you may imitate what you ought to avoid. Be bold, my Lord, in your doubts as in your applauſe: that which appears wrong to you, even in the beſt and greateſt Writers of antiquity, ſuppoſe at leaſt may be ſo: they were men, as ſuch you will know they may have erred; and where, upon mature deliberation, you are led to diſpute their expreſſion, never let their authority weigh with you to praiſe.

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THUS much, my Lord, I have thought neceſſary to premiſe to my pointing out the few things in *Xenophon* which are not proper to be the ſubjects of your Lordſhip's imitation. Study his plainneſs, my Lord, and you will have his perſpicuity, the firſt and greateſt of all praiſe in writing, and the praiſe which *Xenophon* is firſt and greateſt of all writers in deſerving; ſtudy his choice of words, ſtudy his eaſe, for, though it appears natural, it is the effect of labour; that which ſhews leaſt has moſt of it. But, my Lord, if you ſhould be as ready to ſpeak in the Houſe, as his Heroe in the Field, you would be troubleſome and impertinent; if you ſhould accuſtom yourſelf to ſpeak upon as trifling occaſions, you would not be heard when the moſt important were your ſubjects. If it ever ſhould be neceſſary, my Lord, to ſpeak upon a ſubject of little conſequence, the only thing that can recommend the harangue is brevity: on this part, my Lord, if *Xenophon* were to be conſulted as an oracle, he would deceive, for his Heroe's ſpeeches on the leaſt important things are often long; you will find them tedious, my Lord, and don't be afraid to call them dull and impertinent, becauſe you ſee them under the ſanction of his name. Right and wrong will be themſelves in ſpite of all the accidents that can attend on them, and it is not the greateſt name in the world that will change one into the other.

YOU will not imagine, my Lord, that while I cenſure ſome of the harangues in this celebrated, this favourite, Author, I mean to extend the judgment to them all. You will be able to diſtinguiſh

tinguiſh thoſe which are properly of this character, and you will find, my Lord, there are others which deſerve the higheſt praiſe, and which you cannot too often read or too often imitate. You will diſtinguiſh, in the beginning of a ſpeech, whether there be any thing to be ſaid, or whether it be mere matter of form; too many of them are ſo. We find him making people ſpeak, not becauſe they had any occaſion to ſpeak, but becauſe he thought they ought to ſpeak in that place. We ſhould not think ſo: but, my Lord, let us not cenſure him in particular for what was the fault of the times. On the other hand, when he has ſcope and room for declamation, I don't know any that has gone beyond him. With what elegance and winning force does *Cyrus*, in one of his ſpeeches, inforce concord among armies! in another with what divine eloquence does he perſuade to a love of glory! His applauſe of fraternal affection carries conviction in every line; and, in fine, my Lord, the laſt ſpeech of *Cyrus* to his ſon, is one of the moſt elegant pieces you will ever ſee.

XENOPHON has been accuſed of more faults than I have charged him with; but, my dear Lord, petulance is the vice of critics: it is ſcarce poſſible to find one that is candid: few dare praiſe: and very few, if they do, will omit to counterbalance the applauſe with cenſure. It is in the nature of his ſtyle to appear ſometimes cold, but he is always proper; and thoſe who have found fault with the length of ſome of his narrations, have not diſtinguiſhed, that although there wanted buſineſs, there did not want inſtruction; and that what they accuſe as a dull ſtory

he meant as a ſober leſſon of morality. They quarrel with the form, while they are ignorant of the matter, and where they ought to admire, condemn.

ALTHOUGH I juſtify, in the moſt full manner, this Author againſt many of the cenſures that I have heard paſſed upon him, there is yet a head on which he might have been accuſed, and which, unleſs my partiality to him were greater than my deſires of being uſeful to your Lordſhip, it muſt be impoſſible for me to omit the mentioning. Nothing is ſo dangerous to the man who would form himſelf upon another, as the faults which have a face of beauties. Among theſe I don't know any one ſo likely to impoſe upon a young mind as thoſe which attempt it under the ſhape of pleaſantry. There is nothing ſo deſirable as wit, nothing ſo difficult. Men who have ſucceeded in all things elſe have failed in this. It is of all parts of writing which claim any merit, that which is leaſt willingly allowed, which is moſt ſubject to cavil, and which, when allowed, has leaſt praiſe. My intent, in all that I write on this occaſion, my dear Lord, is, to contribute what little may be in my power toward your making a figure in the moſt auguſt of all aſſemblies: I would caution you, my Lord, above all things, againſt attempting to make yourſelf conſpicuous there by wit; let it be the laſt thing, my Lord, as it is the leaſt that can be uſeful to you; as the moſt difficult of the attainment, as the leaſt valued when attained, as the moſt precarious, and as that the attempt of which when it does not ſucceed, or even the ſucceeding in it when humour, or when fancy in

thoſe

thoſe who hear, do not accord to it (and it is in a great part the work of fancy) is unhappy, and inſtead of praiſe produces reproach.

XENOPHON, excellent in ſo many things, of ſuch great qualities, and of ſuch power in ſo many reſpects, has attempted it, and he has failed. You will find him often attempting to be humorous, and always aukwardly and unſucceſsfully: his repartees, which he intends for ſmartneſs, are often dull, and they are much oftener low and mean, his conceits are forced; he wanders a great way for ſome new and ſome unobvious thought, and when produced, it is cold, jejune, and often unnatural. My dear Lord, take this as a certainty, that wit, when laboured, ceaſes to be wit. What you admire in the diſcourſe of the men of fancy and imagination, is the immediate produce of the genius, and its principal merit is, that it is born of the occaſion. Thoſe who take a great deal of pains to ſay pretty things always fail. *Xenophon* does not often attempt it, but where he does he generally miſſes: Look upon thoſe paſſages as blemiſhes, my Lord, they will be leſſons for the avoiding ſuch others, as uſeful as thoſe of imitation.

Do not let it appear ſingular, my Lord, that a great writer, like *Xenophon*, has it not in his power to be a facetious one. *Demoſthenes*, much greater than he, has attempted it, and, as I have before obſerved, with as little ſucceſs. Affectation, my Lord, diſgraces a performance more than all other blemiſhes; and this in both is affectation. Perhaps the cuſtom of the time re-

quired it, perhaps they envied ſome who had ſucceeded: be that as it will, they have forced themſelves into the attempt, and they have failed in it. They ſtand as rocks in the great ocean, conſpicuous, and therefore eaſily to be avoided.

I HAVE done with *Xenophon* as an Hiſtorian, my Lord, and as a Moraliſt: but there is another character, and that a very amiable and a very honourable one, in which we are to view him: he is of all the antient writers, the moſt rationally religious. This may appear an odd praiſe for a man of genius to your Lordſhip, who cannot but have obſerved that it is by no means what thoſe who affect genius, at this time, are deſirous of acquiring; and who have not yet had opportunities of knowing, that the very greateſt of all times have been eminently ſo. *Herodotus* ſpeaks with an enthuſiaſtic kind of reverence concerning many of the peculiar rites of worſhip; but his is a reſpect for the form, *Xenophon* declares himſelf more coolly, and his eſteem and regard are not for the exterior offices, but for its eſſence.

HE who is honeſt in the cauſe of religion, will never hold the ceremonies of his country in diſreſpect. *Xenophon* was remarkable for his attachment to all its moſt minute obſervances, and whenever he ſpeaks of them, it is with a profound regard. Whenever he has occaſion to appeal to Religion itſelf, he does it in ſo awful and ſo ſolemn a manner, that the very ſimplicity of his phraſe beſpeaks reverence. You will admire him in this, my Lord, and I know you will imitate him. Nothing is ſo unbecoming

coming as a light and ludicrous mention of things either sacred, or but held sacred among men. I know you will not have occasion to make any thing of this kind your professed subjects; but when there is occasion to introduce them into your discourse, my Lord, do it as *Xenophon* did, and you will always have applause. You will procure for yourself that respect with which you treat things in their nature respectable.

I KNOW, my Lord, you will not be satisfied with the History and the Morality of *Xenophon*; you will be eager to see also his Philosophy. I would have it be the last thing you read, and I have therefore named it last; you will find it in his account of the *Memorable actions and sayings of Socrates*, and in his *Apology for that divine Philosopher*. It is singular, that men of the same principles, followers of the same master, and engaged in the same cause of immortalising the fame of that master, should be enemies; but this was the case with *Xenophon* and *Plato*. It will be explained to you, however, in some degree, my Lord, when you shall have heard that they were rivals. They excelled in the same way of writing, and were even rivals in the beauty of the same dialect, the Attic. Both were eminent in the elegance and purity of their style, both were gentle and easy in their manner, and you will find, my Lord, that there are charms in this not to be resisted: but they differed greatly; *Plato* was diffuse and figurative in an almost extravagant manner; *Xenophon*, perhaps not without an equal genius, had more reserve. You will have great pleasure in both,

my dear Lord, but that from *Plato* will be the moſt affecting, that from *Xenophon* the moſt ſolid.

You muſt not wonder, at that reſpect, ariſing almoſt to veneration, which this Author expreſſes every where for *Socrates*. He was many years his ſcholar, and, as far as we can collect from hiſtory, of a turn and temper of mind pretty like that of his inſtructor. He had all the mildneſs, all the affability, all the humility and modeſty of that great and good man, and it is not a wonder that he was a particular favourite among his pupils. Upon the whole, there appears in no Author among the whole claſſic rank, a more eminent goodneſs of heart, or a greater regard to juſtice, and that which is yet more ſacred even than juſtice, to religion. His turn of mind is greatly worth imitation, and his plainneſs and perſpicuity of expreſſion are happily ſuited to his ſentiments and to his manner. There are many writers, whoſe beauties are more ſtriking than thoſe of *Xenophon*, but not one whom it is ſo ſafe, or whom it is ſo eaſy to imitate.

I ſhall not recommend *Polybius* to you, my Lord, as an Hiſtorian who, like *Thucydides*, rivals the eloquence of *Demoſthenes*, or, like *Herodotus*, diſputes the prize of poetical invention and embelliſhment with *Homer*: neither can I, with juſtice, give him the perſpicuity or the plainneſs of *Xenophon*. Read *Polybius*, for you muſt read him; there is not one of them from whom you will receive more pleaſure, or more inſtruction; read him, and as you go on,

apply

apply to certain paſſages of *Xenophon*, and you will ſee, by the compariſon, that what appears moſt eaſy is not written with moſt eaſe; you will ſee the ſimplicity of *Xenophon* in a new light, and for the firſt time you will ſee it in the true one. You will find it the effect of labour and of art; and the more to be applauded as that labour and that art are ſo carefully and ſo well concealed. In *Polybius* you will ſee what is the careleſs writer of all the allowed Claſſics, none is ſo careleſs: perhaps none except himſelf is at all ſo. You will ſee his irregularities, his redundancies, and his confuſion, and you will reſpect the art and the attention which in others have corrected and ſuppreſſed them.

I AM of opinion, my Lord, that *Polybius* is the only writer of this claſs who put down his rough thoughts, and never after methodized and corrected them. It is not a wonder, therefore, that he is crude and poor in his expreſſion in compariſon of any of the others: that great accuracy which you will ſee and which you will admire in them, my Lord, is not the child of genius alone: it is the fruit of continued labour, and there is no other way of attaining it. Thoſe paſſages which have gained them immortality were the reſult of years of ſtudy: they turned and altered their periods in many forms before they would let them ſtand, they were nice beyond modern compoſers in the choice of their words, and every thing was conſidered and retouched again and again before it appeared in public. It is plain *Polybius* has nothing of this accuracy, and it is as plain that one of the nobleſt hiſtories in the world is greatly injured by it.

He is often confuſed, always irregular, and there is in his writings nothing of that muſical cadence, that meaſured harmony which we ſee ſo conſpicuouſly in *Iſocrates*, and which appears more or leſs in all the others. He is inelegant in his expreſſions, and negligent in his choice of words. But though he is often cold and jejune, he ſometimes riſes into figures, and that of the boldeſt kind.

I HAVE given up the language of *Polybius*, my Lord, but that is all of him which can be cenſured; for the reſt, no man was ever better qualified, in every reſpect, for an Hiſtorian; and none has executed the office with more punctuality, or with greater impartiality. His integrity has never been queſtioned, his judgment is beyond diſpute, and no man ever took equal pains to make himſelf a maſter of his ſubject. He every where ſhews great diſcernment, and he is in all places bold to ſpeak what he thinks. He is ſerious and he is poſitive, but he is always right when he is ſo. When he ſticks cloſe to his matter, you will hardly have opportunities, of obſerving the defects of his ſtyle, but he is, of all writers, the moſt vague and unlimited. He frequently runs off into things foreign to his purpoſe, often into impertinencies; and it is in theſe paſſages that he is moſt diſguſtful: from the true ſcheme of Hiſtory, which is counſelling by facts, he often plays the monitor in diſcourſe, and theſe alſo are paſſages that diſhonour him.

YOU will eaſily diſtinguiſh, my Lord, in all parts of *Polybius*, that he was a man of rank and fortune: the ſpirit with which he writes denotes this

this fully; and wherever he has occasion to enter into the politics of his country, you will find that he was a perfect master of that branch of knowledge. To the cabinet he joined the field, he was a great General as well as a great Minister. Where he reasons on the causes, the conduct, and the event of an action, how consummate a statesman! but when he describes the action, it is there that he is all himself. The warmth, the fire, the precipitancy, with which he hurries his reader into the middle of the scene, are inimitable. The punctual accuracy with which he describes every motion and every circumstance of the engagement, the rapidity with which he changes measures, rallies, pursues, and triumphs, are beyond description, and indeed above the conception of all who have not seen an army in that terrible moment. For the rest you may guess, my Lord, what this writer was, when you have heard that the immortalized *Brutus* had him for ever in his hand, and that *Tully* abridged his writings for his own use, and made them his constant theme of praise, as well as his frequent study. But there is yet a greater praise, although a less acknowledged one. *Livy*, my Lord, that *Livy* whose fame has reached all over the earth, and who is esteemed by many the Prince of Historians, formed himself on *Polybius*, nay much more, he formed his History in part from him. *Livy*, my Lord, has in many places translated *Polybius* word for word, and this not in single passages but in whole books, and many are not aware, that what they have adored in the *Latin*, is indeed the merit of the *Greek* Historian.

POLYBIUS writes the ſtory of fifty three years. The modern Hiſtorian will begin from the creation, and bring down his work to the day in which he cloſes the relation. What dependance can we place on men who write of things concerning which they know no more than we do, or than we may know; or have any thing to ſay but what they have read where we may alſo read it? With the real Hiſtorians thoſe of the antient time (for few others deſerve the name) it was otherwiſe, they wrote of the things which themſelves had ſeen, and this Author of things in moſt of which himſelf had been concerned. He had for his ſubject all the great actions which had been done from the commencement of the ſecond *Punic* war to the concluſion of that which cloſed the diſputes between the *Romans* and the *Macedonian* Kings, the deſtruction of their Monarchy. His great end was the pointing out the ſtory of the *Romans*, and their conqueſts of the greateſt part of the then known world, but he did not confine himſelf to the events that concerned this ſingle ſyſtem, but has given us a ſpirited and a faithful Hiſtory of whatever paſſed in the years in which himſelf lived. He is full and copious in his relations, and in moſt of them you will not need, my Lord, to read any Author after him for full information.

All things conſpired to make him an Hiſtorian; he was of a conſiderable family, and he had been intruſted with the moſt important affairs, and from his youth accuſtomed and inured to buſineſs in the politic world; his education was a very finiſhed one at home, and he added

to

to it all that could be learned among the *Romans*. He became early a maſter of their language, and at one time was acknowledged better verſed in the laws and conſtitutions of their empire than any of their own ſtateſmen. He was, in all things, indefatigable in his qualifying himſelf for the perfect maſtery of what he undertook. It was early in his life that he was honoured with a public character, and attended his father, a General and an Ambaſſador to *Egypt*. Here he enquired into all things that related to the country, and it was here he firſt imbibed the reſolution of viſiting all the places of which he ſhould thereafter write, and ſeeing with his own eyes what he was to deſcribe to others. He went to many parts of *Europe*, *Aſia*, and *Africa* with this intent; and, as he carried with him his deſign, he was earneſt in enquiring, and accurate in noting all that might concern his Hiſtory: that he might juſtly repreſent *Hannibal*'s march over the *Alps*, he traced his ſteps over them with his own feet, and he paid the ſame reſpect to *Scipio*'s atchievements in *Spain*, viſiting all the places which it was neceſſary to mention in the deſcribing of them.

THIS is the true ſpirit of Hiſtory, and it was this ſpirit that gained *Polybius* glories unknown to thoſe whom we who judge by the exterior, place above him. *Scipio* and *Lelius* thought themſelves honoured in his acquaintance; *Conſtantine* paid a regard to his negotiations as if the oracles of truth, and the ſureſt guides in all parallel circumſtances: it was he who cauſed the accounts of them to be tranſcribed and preſerved; he conſulted them, and he recommended them

to the world by that more strongly than he could have done by any form of applause; to crown his glory the *Greeks* erected statues to him, and called him the protector, the saver, and the support of his country. I am sorry to close the account with something that, to your Lordship's just opinion, will be a greater stain upon him not only than all his deficiencies of style, but to all he could have had in the more essential parts of his character. You, my Lord, who have joined, for I know you have joined with me, for reverencing *Herodotus* for his regard to religion, how will you, on the contrary, detest and despise this, in other respects, great man, when you hear that he was the champion and patron of impiety? You will shudder, my Lord, to find him declaring against the belief in a Deity, and laughing at his power of rewards and punishments, and at mens entertaining hopes and fears on such occasions: superstition he every where holds in that contempt a wise man ought; but you will be shocked, my Lord, to find he comprehends every article of Religion within that term. He pronounces the Gods to be the creatures of human policy; if men were wise and virtuous, he says there would be no occasion for such chimeras, but as they are not, it is a good contrivance of the wise to awe the ignorant.

IT is singular, but it is not a wonder that it is so, that of all men Atheists are the most inconsistent with themselves. We have instances of those who all their lives had denied the being of a God, praying when in imminent danger. A shipwreck, or a contagion, has given

given them all the good opinions of other people. The same inconsistency of behaviour appears in *Polybius*: he who in so many places laughs at heaven and hell, and banters their inhabitants, attributes, in another, the prosperity of his own country, *Arcadia*, to their care in preserving the altars of the Gods, and in their reverence for their rites, and in another place charges it as one of the greatest reproaches of war, that it violates and destroys temples.

THOSE who have not considered the writer throughout, have been establishing him on these passages a reputation for piety; but you, my Lord, will judge by the whole, and in that judgment you will either find him guilty of a fault which none yet have suspected, the writing otherwise than as he thought, or you will despise that inconsistency and contradiction into which his wild and unsupported notions have plunged him.

WE have scarce any thing perfect of what these fathers of learning and of knowledge have left us; part of *Polybius*, part of *Thucydides*, and great part of *Herodotus* are lost, and not nearly half the writings of *Diodorus Siculus* remain to us. I do not think this strange, although in the highest degree to be lamented: it is rather wonderful that after the changes and chances of things during so long and so unsettled a period, any thing remains to us, than that a part is lost. We are to look upon antient learning as a vessel wrecked in the wide ocean, and to congratulate ourselves on what part of the treasure has been

been washed on shore, rather than to repine at what is lost.

I HAVE mentioned *Diodorus* with an intent of recommending him to your perusal; but, my dear Lord, you are not to place any thing near the rank of those whom I have just mentioned. Genius was their character, industry was that of *Diodorus*. I do not mean to infer from this that he had not genius; and you know, my Lord, that they had application. I mention only what was most conspicuous in both. It is well that you will have formed an idea of style before you meddle with this writer: you would not learn it there; on the contrary, my Lord, you will find his manner to be avoided. His language is inelegant: his periods harsh and irregular, and his whole conduct and arrangement, not to give it a worse name, careless in a high degree. You have here nothing of that luxuriant fancy which you have admired in *Herodotus*, none of the strength and manly eloquence of *Thucydides*. But, my Lord, *Diodorus* has his merit, though it be not in this point. Although you are not to read him for his language, his matter is important.

I NEED not tell you, that in this Author you are falling upon History of a new kind, you are not now reading what they saw, who wrote it, or turning over pages, every sentence of which is authentic. You are to understand a great part of what you read as fable, but it is fable as necessary to be known as the most important History. I am leading you, my Lord, toward the Poets, and they are not to be understood

understood without a prior acquaintance with their theology, this you will no where meet with so authentic in its kind as in this Author, no where so full. You have here the whole history of the Deities they worshipped, the story of the Creation of the world, and the compleat system of what is called the Early, or by a more proper term, the Fabulous History.

YOU are not, my Lord, to look upon *Diodorus* as an original writer, so much as a compiler; he was much what we at present understand by the term *Author*, only with more of the merit; he had read all the books on his subject, and he had compiled from them all, but he had also visited many of the places which he mentions, in regard to the more recent events. Were it only that he has preserved to us the most material part of books of earlier time, which are now lost, he would be of great value; but he has indeed somewhat more. Though in general a compiler, he is sometimes an original. Your Lordship will distinguish those parts by the period which they concern, and yet more by their language; it is in these and only these, that you can properly judge of his style. While a man is putting down the thoughts of others, he is cramped and fettered, it is only when he is writing from himself that he is at liberty. I do not pretend, to place any part of *Diodorus Siculus* as worthy imitation, or worthy any great praise, he was cotemporary with *Augustus Cæsar*, and the *Greek* language was then no longer what it had been: he had not the advantages, if he had possessed the genius, of those great writers; but although he no where aims at sublimity or eloquence,

quence, you will find him remarkably clear, and better in thoſe parts where he is original, than when he is copying from others.

You muſt not ſuppoſe the office of a mere compiler eaſy, my Lord: if it be done injudiciouſly the work can be of no value; and the knowledge and ſagacity neceſſary to qualify a man for doing it to his honour, and the world's advantage, are ſufficient to have made him a not contemptible original. *Diodorus* has not been uncenſured in this reſpect, but much is to be ſaid in his defence. He has, it is certain, given place to ſtrange and incredible things in his five firſt books, which contain the earlier Hiſtory, but he does not deliver them all as truths, he does not pretend to have believed them himſelf, or to make others believe them: he confeſſes, in his account of his work, that he has been obliged to mention many fabulous, extravagant, and unnatural things in them; and in other places he found it neceſſary to inſert according to his deſign. In this he has done what *Herodotus* did long before him, he has given a place to many things which, according to the plan of his work he thought neceſſary to be inſerted, although he did not believe them; and notwithſtanding that he has ſaid they are to be received as fable, he has been accuſed as credulous by thoſe who had read him partially. You will not judge in ſuch a manner, my Lord, and conſequently you will not be one of the cenſurers of the Claſſics.

You will find, my Lord, all that can be found of the antiquities of the *Greeks* and the Barbarian nations in his firſt five books; there was a

ſixth,

ſixth, that brought down that period to the time of the *Trojan* war, but that is wanting, as are all the others to the eleventh, and after the twentieth; in thoſe however, which continue the ſtory to that extent, there is no deficiency, and you will find in them all that is remarkable during the great extent of time they comprehend, which is all that intervenes between the expedition of *Xerxes* into *Greece*, and the year of the world 3650, where the ſtory ends. What you will find here, my Lord, of the hiſtory of thoſe nations which he has occaſion to mention, will make all that you ſhall after read elſewhere familiar, and if there be among the relations ſome things which your judgment will not ſuffer you to believe, there are at the ſame time a vaſt many which it is abſolutely neceſſary you ſhould know. I am aſſured, my Lord, your own judgment will ſeparate theſe from the others. You will be pleaſed to remember, that the *Greek* of *Diodorus* is not elegant, and that his Hiſtory is not all truth, and with this caution there are few Authors you will read with more advantage.

THE *Greek* of *Dionyſius* of *Halicarnaſſus* is not of the antient purity, any more than that of *Diodorus Siculus*; nor was it poſſible it ſhould be ſo: the language was in its decline when *Diodorus* wrote, and *Dionyſius* lived at the ſame period. You will have pleaſure, my Lord, in comparing the works of two Authors in the ſame language, and under the ſame ſtate of that language, who wrote on the ſame ſubject. Play the Critic, I recommend it to you, my Lord, and when you have conſidered and com-

compared them, you will not find quite ſo much to be allowed for the better or worſe ſtate of a language as is generally granted. You will find that a different genius will make a very different uſe of the ſame language under the ſame advantages.

INSTEAD of the careleſs and inaccurate manner of *Diodorus*, you will find *Dionyſius*, my Lord, elegant, correct, and expreſſive, nor will you be at a loſs to find the reaſon. You will ſee that the former wrote merely from fancy and rude nature, as *Polybius* had done before him; but, on the contrary, you will ſee that *Dionyſius* has formed himſelf upon the great writers who went before him; you will ſee that he had read them carefully, and that he had imitated their excellencies. He had uſed them, my Lord, as I would have you uſe them, look into him and you will not need a better model or a fairer example. Altho' he is perfectly formed upon them, although he has borrowed his manner from them all, yet he is like no one of them. His ſtyle is his own. It is peculiar in a high degree, more different from them than they from one another; and ſo, my Lord, it will always be, when there is genius to model imitation.

YOU will find him emulating the familiar, plain, and perſpicuous manner of *Xenophon*, and you will find him as eaſy and as clear as his original. *Dionyſius* knew there was beauty in this plainneſs; but he did not think all beauty centered in it. He had a quick conception of the nervous manner of *Thucydides*, and if your diſcernment, ſhall find him leſs happy in this

this imitation, you will allow that he has, in many places, beautifully copied the diffuſe manner of *Herodotus*, and has been happier, in a great degree, in thoſe digreſſions by which he, like that father of Hiſtory, enlivens his works.

SUCH is the ſtyle of *Dionyſius*, my Lord, it is more varied than that of any other Author, and that for a plain reaſon, it is formed on the excellencies of ſeveral others. You will find him occaſionally familiar and ſublime, conciſe where it is neceſſary, and diffuſe where that appears agreeable. But in all this, my Lord, as you have the ſame originals on which he eſtabliſhed himſelf, I do not recommend him as your pattern, ſtudy thoſe whom *Dionyſius* ſtudied, not *Dionyſius*; but when you would know how to bring the effects of that ſtudy into uſe, then conſider the manner in which *Dionyſius* has done it.

THE polite arts were at the period when *Dionyſius* had removed from *Greece*; the taſte, the talents, and the munificence of *Auguſtus* had brought them all to *Rome*; 'twas there this Author ſtudied; it was from the writers in that language that he collected his materials? and where could he ſo well collect them? Of whom but of the great men could he learn the neceſſary things which were to be the foundation of his *Roman* antiquities?! We have ſhared the common fate with regard to the works of *Dionyſius*, little more than half of what he originally wrote remain to us; but theſe contain an inexhauſtible fund of knowledge in the moſt neceſſary branch. It has been the great blemiſh in all theſe writers, that they have related things too extravagant and too abſurd

abſurd to be believed, I do not pretend to accuſe *Dionyſius* of more of this than the reſt, but in this he is faulty more than they, he gives you no reaſon to doubt but that himſelf believed them. He traced the *Romans* to their earlieſt origin, and has even enquired into the ſtory of thoſe who peopled *Italy* before them; it is not to be wondered, that in ſo dark and ſo remote a reſearch, he ſhould have ſpoken many things at random; but it is certainly a blot in his character, that he was too much inclined to believe them.

IT has been obſerved, that foreigners have written better of our Hiſtory, and have had a more perfect knowledge of our conſtitution than thoſe of our own nation: It is ſo in reſpect to theſe famous people; a *Greek* has given a more full, more accurate, and more perfect account of their civil and religious ceremonies; their conſtitution, government, and ſeveral ranks and orders; the privileges, the power, and the dependencies of each, than any of their own nation. It is of conſequence, my Lord, that you ſhould be acquainted with all theſe things, and *Dionyſius* is the Author who will beſt inform you of them. *Polybius* was allowed, at *Rome*, to underſtand their laws and conſtitution better than all their own people: and *Dionyſius Halicarnaſſeus* had the ſame character. It is not a wonder what was familiar to the people themſelves was neglected, thoſe who came to ſtudy the conſtitution examined all its parts more perfectly.

I HAVE done with the character of *Dionyſius* as an Hiſtorian, but it remains that I ſpeak of him as a Rhetorician. You will read his pieces on

on this ſubject with profit rather than with pleaſure. He is too proſix in ſome places, too ſhort in others, and too poſitive in all. You will find in him, my Lord, all the rules of correct writing, but you muſt not be diſcouraged by his judgments. He ſets fine writing at too immenſe a height. It will appear inacceſſible, and if we allowed his judgments in their full force, indeed it would be ſo in earneſt. He is too ſevere in his cenſures, and I am ſorry to ſay it, but he plainly poſſeſſes that ſpirit of ſpleen and envy which has diffuſed itſelf over the works of the ſucceeding Critics. You will know what to think, my Lord, of thoſe principles according to which neither *Herodotus* nor *Thucydides* were good Hiſtorians: you will know what to judge of his candour, who cannot like the language and the manner of *Plato*. His rules are juſt, my Lord, but he ſtretches them too far in the uſe. You may be taught by him the way to many beauties, but be not deterred by his ſeverity, it is poſſible to be very great, and yet to be liable to a thouſand of his cenſures.

I HAVE produced you, my Lord, in *Dionyſius*, an inſtance of that purity and elegance of which the *Greek* was capable after the time in which it had its higheſt perfection. *Arrian* is a greater. It would not be eaſy, indeed, to produce, from the earlieſt times, a more elegant Writer. His ſtyle is peculiar to himſelf, it is familiar, but yet it is in ſome degree elevated; he is correct beyond moſt of the Claſſics themſelves, and there is a muſical turn in his periods which greatly recommends him. His ſtyle is delicate and yet has ſtrength, it is ſoft and flowing,

ing, and at the ſame time it is in the higheſt degree expreſſive.

You will eaſily diſtinguiſh, my Lord, that as *Dionyſius* imitated the excellencies of all three of his great predeceſſors, *Arrian* has ſtuck to one of them. You will find *Xenophon* to be the model upon whom he has, in all things, formed himſelf, and you will wiſh it had not been ſo. There is a coldneſs, a tameneſs, in parts of his work where ſpirit would have had a better effect; and it is not that he wanted fire that he omitted it, but that *Xenophon*, whom he ſeems to have eſteemed as the model of all perfection, did not give him authority for it. He is very happy in his uſe of figures, and he does not uſe them ſparingly; but though he has all the appropriation, he has nothing of the boldneſs of *Thucydides* in the introduction of them. He has harangues, and they are fine ones. They are not frequent in his works, but they are very conſpicuous, and it were injuſtice to ſuppoſe he had formed them upon the manner of any who went before him: they are peculiar, and they are quite his own; they are full of argument, and they are happily levelled at the paſſions.

You will read Hiſtory, my Lord, no where ſo familiarly as in *Arrian*; there is a ſimplicity in his ſtyle which renders him particularly eaſy. He is always intelligible, becauſe he no where perplexes his ſentences with an intent of ornamenting them. He has no redundance of epithets, nor are thoſe he uſes ſtrained or far-fetched; in ſhort, not ſo much from a cloſeneſs of expreſſion, for that is not his talent,

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as from a laboured banishing of all foreign matter. His story is plainly, and, at the same time, agreeably told, and he always gets on in it just as fast as the reader wishes. No man has more studied the turn and temper of the reader. He never hurries over important things in such a manner that you are forced to go back to them, nor ever delays you when you want to get forward. He is not without digressions, but they are when the mind begins to be tired with the long thread, and to require them: he is sometimes diffuse, but it is when the attention is less strained on the story. Few, very few, have written better, my Lord, than *Arrian*; none more pleasingly.

YOU will be pleased, that an Author who commands so much of your attention deserves it. The matter which you read in *Arrian* deserves as much praise as his expression. Integrity is his great character, and he is in this also peculiarly happy, that while he demands belief, he has been very cautious how he gave it. Credulity has been the great blemish in most of the Historians characters. *Arrian* is clear of it. They have been fond of strange relations; he has been greatly upon his guard against them: he brought whatsoever offered, to the test of the judgment, before he gave it a place in his History; and in consequence of this cautious conduct, although he has taken in a very large space of time, and a wide field for relation, you can hardly any where accuse him of things that are not to be credited.

YOU will diſtinguiſh in *Arrian*, my Lord, although he does not affect to ſhew it, a great knowledge in Philoſophy, and in his relations of the cauſes and ſecret ſprings to actions, you will diſtinguiſh that he muſt have been deeper in the politics of the country than any one could be who had not been intruſted with their management. *Arrian* was indeed, like the reſt of the Claſſics, a great man as well as a great writer. He had been in the higheſt employments, and it is eaſy to ſee that it is a ſtateſman and a general who deſcribes the conſultations and the engagements.

ARRIAN's works have travelled down to us imperfect, as thoſe of the reſt of the *Greek* Hiſtorians; but when we read his deſcription of *Alexander*'s victories, we cannot but lament it as no common loſs, that we have no more of his relation of the ſucceeding time, than an abridgment in another Writer. We are obliged to *Photius*, who has given us this ſpecimen of thoſe pieces, but we have only the ſeverer ſenſe of the loſs.

THE antient Writers were not, like the modern, tied down to one ſubject. The ſame talents which qualify a man for writing well on one will on another: application indeed is neceſſary to this; but application was a thing in which the antients were as eminent as we are deficient. When you have admired *Arrian* the Hiſtorian, my Lord, you will have a new pleaſure in your acquaintance with *Arrian* the Moraliſt. You will be charmed with his obſervations on *Epictetus*, and no man could be better qualified to give them. *Arrian* was his ſcholar, and he has every where ſpoken

ſpoken of him with that reverence which was due, and yet he has every where ſhewn a ſtill greater reverence for truth. What we know of *Epictetus*, indeed perhaps that we know there was ſuch a perſon as *Epictetus*, is owing to *Appian*. This was the only ſcholar who paid him a cloſe attendance, and who put down from his mouth what we ſo highly eſteem and ſo worthily applaud.

I WISH, my Lord, I could ſpeak better of *Appian* than truth compels me, but I am ſorry to tell you, that this allowed Claſſic is an allowed thief; he is yet more the modern Author than one whom I have called by that name before. He has ſtole from all Writers who went before him; and in this he differs from all the reſt, that what he had thus borrowed he did not make his own in the delivery. After this ſad character of *Appian*, I would not have your Lordſhip omit to read him; he is full of matter, and much of it important. He has found the way to throw together a vaſt variety of incidents that deſerve remembrance, and after the cenſure I have paſſed upon him, I muſt do him the juſtice to ſay, he is a thief of judgment. He profeſſedly copied every thing he thought to his purpoſe from every body who had written on the ſubject, but he has had the prudence to take with caution. He has left out all the miraculous ſtories and abſurd relations; and whatſoever he has given you is either true, or at leaſt is probable, and may have been true. There is alſo another circumſtance for which he deſerves honour: he has rejected all the impertinencies of his originals, he has thrown out all the oſtentation of harangues ſo frequent

and ſo tedious in many of thoſe to whom he has been obliged, and given you the bare matter.

STYLE he has none. He is in one part copious, in another conciſe; in one place he is ſublime, in another familiar. You are not to ſuppoſe from this, my dear Lord, that he had the happy power of varying his ſtyle at pleaſure. Were that the caſe, he would have adapted it to his particular ſubjects; but that is not the praiſe of *Appian*: whatever Author he had been obliged to, that Author's ſtyle is ſeen, and it would not be difficult for a critic in language, it will not be difficult for ſuch a judge of it as I expect ſome day to find in your Lordſhip, to ſay from what Writer he has copied any particular part, without remembering the matter.

IF the Hiſtory of *Appian* is not his own, his manner and diſtribution of it certainly are ſo; if the matter be old the form is new, and it is not without its merit; he has arranged the actions according to the places, and made them follow one another according to the countries in which the ſcene lay. This is an unprecedented method, and almoſt an unfollowed one, but there is a kind of regularity in it. Inſtead of the continued ſtory of one man, we ſee the ſeries of events that have happened on one ſpot; and we have at once the Hiſtory of the place and of the people. *Appian* was a voluminous writer, but only a ſmall part of his works have been preſerved to us; in theſe we ſee a great punctuality in the relation of facts, and it is eaſy to diſcover that the Writer intends to deliver the unaltered Truth. That there was more of induſtry than

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of genius, one may trace in all parts of his writings, and in particular his ſtyle, where it is his own, confirms it. He ſhews no mark of genius or of fire in it; he is plain and ſimple, but it is a natural and a rude ſimplicity, not that judicious and ſtudied plainneſs which we ſee in others. He no where affects to be ſublime, he does not ſeem to ſtudy even elegance: he ſeems to look upon this part of his work, which is all that is properly his own, as no more than the neceſſary connecting portion that links the other or material part together, introducing and arranging the reſt; and he has beſtowed no pains upon it. For the reſt, that is for the body of the work, it is too much theirs from whom he pilfered it, to be ſpoken of as his in whom we ſee it.

SOME of the greateſt events in the *Roman* Hiſtory are to be read in thoſe parts of *Appian* which remain, and I don't know where I could recommend it to your Lordſhip to find them ſo well together; the *Syrian* and the *Parthian* wars are well deſcribed, the events of the *Punic* are got together in a little compaſs, and the ſtory of the civil wars which tore that country from the time of the *Gracchi* is happily told. I would adviſe you to read *Appian*, my Lord, though I know you will have too much judgment to admire him, and that you will well know how to determine of thoſe who praiſe him. To a man who had not read the *Grecian* Hiſtory, there would be indeed great appearance of merit in him, for he tranſcribes whole accounts, and is no where ſo honeſt as to confeſs that they are not his own. You will remember to have read

them before in *Polybius*, in *Herodotus*, or in *Xenophon*, but thoſe whoſe acquaintance with theſe ſtudies is not ſufficient for the detecting, may very well admire the plagiary.

YOU will not wonder, my Lord, that a Hiſtorian who wrote at *Rome* concerning the affairs of *Rome*, ſhould be, in general biaſſed on the good-natured ſide, but you will be out of patience with that ſervile partiality which runs through many parts of *Appian*'s works. You will find the *Romans* always in the right, and their enemies always in the wrong. No virtue is allowed to the one, none is denied to the other. I warn you of this, my Lord, where the Author writes of himſelf, and in his own perſon; but this you will eaſily diſtinguiſh from the reſt. There are ſome blunders at which you will ſmile, but they are not of conſequence, at leaſt they will not be ſo to you, who have ſuch a foundation in Hiſtory before you read him.

IN *Dio Caſſius*, my Lord, you will meet with an Author of a very different ſtamp. Of all the *Greek* Hiſtorians after the three firſt, thoſe have ſucceeded beſt who have made ſome one of theſe their model; you will find *Dio* a laboured imitator of *Thucydides*, and you will own him a very happy one. He is ſublime and great in many places equally to his model, and he has not copied the beauties only of that Author, but his ſingularities. You will remember, my Lord, that I took particular notice of the boldneſs as well as happineſs of *Thucydides*'s hyperbatons. *Dio* is as bold, and he is as happy in them, and he uſes them as frequently. He is as free in his intro-

introduction of foreign matter into his harangues, and he as happily returns from it, and gives new graces to his ſubject by it. You find me, my Lord, recommending *Dio* for ſtyle. Were the writings of *Thucydides* loſt, *Dio* would be glorious. As it is to you, my Lord, who are ſo well, who will be ſo much better acquainted with the original before you read this copy, he will ſerve as an excellent example of that height to which men may riſe by forming themſelves upon good originals; and he will ſhew you in what manner that imitation, which is an honour to the perſon who confeſſes it, is to be performed.

I HARDLY know ſo laboured an Author as *Dio Caſſius*, and yet none appears ſo eaſy. There is in him all the grace of a neat arrangement of words, all the merit of a peculiar choice of them, all the harmony of meaſure and numbers, and all the beauty of variety; and yet ſo carefully has the Author concealed the art by which he has effected this, that all ſeems eaſy and natural, the language, excepting only when he has been bold in figures, is that of common converſation, and the words appear to follow one another without all deſign or contrivance. This is the general character of his ſtyle where the matter is eaſy, but when it falls in his way to deſcribe the greateſt events, no man has ſhewn a truer ſenſe of the language that ought to accompany ſuch relations, few have better brought their conceptions into execution. I know you are an enemy to long periods; every man naturally is ſo; but *Dio*, my Lord, will reconcile you to them. You are uneaſy under tranſitions, and cry piſh at a parenthe*ſis*, but *Dio* will give you pleaſure in

them. His ſentences are not embaraſſed but ornamented with theſe, and they do not obſcure but render the expreſſion more plain. The only fault with which they are chargeable is, that they ſometimes render him tedious: all the art in the world cannot take off from their quantity, nor can the addreſs with which he introduces them compriſe them under fewer ſyllables: in this they are an incumbrance, and if I have a fault to lay upon the manner of the Author, it is, that from a confidence in his power of uſing them ſo much to advantage, he has called them in too often.

I WISH, my Lord, I could expreſs myſelf as warmly in the praiſe of the other qualifications of *Dio Caſſius* as I have done of his ſtyle. He is, of all writers of Hiſtory the fartheſt from an unprejudiced one, his partiality for the cauſe of *Cæſar* is evident, and in moſt other caſes he takes the ſame part that fortune has done, and favours the proſperous at the expence of the unhappy. This is not all that is to be objected to his conduct and diſpoſition. You will ſmile, my Lord, at the obſervation, but *Dio Caſſius* was an enthuſiaſt. He believed in a ſort of familiar ſpirit which attended, cautioned, and adviſed him in all things of importance; he attributes the writing of his Hiſtory to the admonition of this familiar, and what was ſo buſy in the inſtigation of the Work, diſplays itſelf alſo abundantly in the courſe of it. He is every where too ſuperſtitious, and there is an air of credulity that runs through all his relations. I need not point out to you, the particular paſſages in which this unhappy turn of mind has led him into diſgrace: you will diſtinguiſh them, my Lord,

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and they will have their use; you will see, how necessary caution and a strict judgment of their own opinions is to the greatest men; you will see how easily a little blemish is seen where all is great about it. The admonition will be of peculiar use to you, my Lord, since I am assured that you will have all the opportunities of making little faults conspicuous.

You find it was the custom with the later *Greek* Historians to study and to write at *Rome*: nay, such partiality had their education given them, and such was the importance of the place when they had obtained it, that they made the *Roman*, and not the *Grecian* or *Barbarian* affairs their subject. *Herodian* was another of them, he lived at *Rome*, he wrote at *Rome*, and he wrote of the *Roman* affairs.

I WOULD recommend *Herodian* in a very particular manner to your Lordship. He is extremely worthy, and you will find him extremely easy of imitation. His style and manner are his own, they are peculiar, and they are singular in the highest degree, but they are not more singular than graceful. I have celebrated the Orator in *Thucydides*, and the Poet in *Herodotus*, but the character of *Herodian* is that of the Gentleman. There is an ease and an unconcern visible in his manner, that you will never see any where else. The whole of his discourse has an air and elegance peculiar to himself, and yet both, though seemingly so free, are limited within bounds, the ease never degenerates into negligence, nor is his delicacy any where carried into affectation. *Herodian* writes as every

man would be ambitious to ſpeak, but he writes as no man ever yet did ſpeak. It is not to be expected that private and occaſional converſation will ever come up to that conſummate beauty and perfection which diſtinguiſh themſelves in the narration and in the reaſoning of *Herodian*; but, my Lord, there is a degree of accuracy and of elegance of which thoſe harangues are capable which are to be pronounced without interruption, and the ſubjects of which may be conſidered before-hand, that will give a ſuperiority over all who ſpeak without ſuch preparation: and this elegant and eaſy accuracy is no where to be ſtudied ſo well as in *Herodian*.

I ADVISE you, my Lord, to have a ſenſe of all the ſublimity of *Thucydides*, and all the fancy of *Herodotus*; but neither is it poſſible to ſpeak as they write, nor, were it poſſible, would it be eligible; there would be a diſguſtful ſtiffneſs, or a diſpleaſing pomp in the harangue; but *Herodian* writes not only as you may ſpeak, but as it will be right to ſpeak, he has juſt the true proportion of elegance and warmth to raiſe him above the common diſcourſe, without carrying him too far from the received manner. Nor is his language, my Lord, the only thing in which he ought to be propoſed as a model to all who would be eminent in public ſpeaking. His conduct and manner are as happy as his expreſſion. While his ſtyle is free and clear, his method is accurate and fine. No man ever had ſo happy a manner of introducing precepts of inſtruction, no man has been ſo eaſy in his digreſſions, and he has ſhewn at once the art of introducing them properly, and of limiting them to their

their due compaſs; what he has called in for his own pleaſure he never continues longer than it will be a pleaſure to his reader. It is impoſſible to read him, without profit intermixed with the pleaſure, and it is thus I would wiſh to have your Lordſhip heard.

THE ſpace of time comprehended in his Hiſtory is not great, but there is an advantage attending the limitation. It is the ſtory of thoſe times only which himſelf ſaw at a period of life when he was able to judge of things and of men. What he relates is, in the much greater part, not what he had heard, but what he knew, what he had ſeen, and, in many things, what himſelf had been concerned in. He was honoured with offices in the ſervice of the government which gave him opportunities of knowing the moſt ſecret ſprings of action, and he has related all he knew; his integrity is as unqueſtioned as his judgment, and I know no Author in whom you will find ſo full, ſo perfect, and ſo impartial an account of the memorable things of that buſy though ſhort period of which he has given the Hiſtory.

THERE are many things in *Herodian*, beſide the immediate buſineſs of Hiſtory, with which you will be extremely pleaſed: the *Roman* ceremonies on many of the great occaſions, and particularly that ſolemn and ſuperb one at the apotheoſis of their Emperors, he has deſcribed with an accuracy punctual enough for a mere relator, but with a dignity of ſtyle equal to the nature of the ſubject. Throughout he is at once delicate and noble, and is a pat-

tern of that eloquence it is moſt proper and moſt rational to emulate.

I CANNOT recommend *Plutarch* to you for imitation in point of ſtyle; but there are a thouſand other reaſons why you ſhould read him: if you take him in the courſe in which I have named him, you will ſee all his deficiencies in ſtyle and language in a very ſtrong light, under the compariſon with the neat, the accurate, and the elegant *Herodian*; but it is beſt it ſhould be ſo: you will ſee his blemiſhes with as much advantage as the beauty of the other, ſince it is as uſeful to know what to avoid as what to imitate.

YOU will yet read him with vaſt pleaſure, my Lord, and with equal profit. Of all ſpecies of Hiſtory, that which has for its object the lives of particular and eminent perſons, is the moſt pleaſing, and you will find that *Plutarch* has uſed its allurements to the beſt purpoſe. He has every where made his lives examples, and filled his Hiſtory with leſſons of morality. You will no where, my Lord, meet with more wiſdom, no where with wiſdom more pleaſingly delivered. While you think you are only looking over the actions of ſome one man, you will be charmed with morals that are the concern of all, delivered in the nobleſt manner, and inforced by examples in ſuch a way that they will never be forgotten. When you have gone through the whole, my Lord, you will find yourſelf a maſter of the *Greek* and *Roman* antiquities, acquired as it were by chance, but implanted, like the morals, in ſuch a manner that they can never be effaced.

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PLUTARCH was another of the *Greeks* who ſpent his life at *Rome*, it was there alone at that time, the foundation of a regular education could be laid, and you will diſtinguiſh in his writings all the effects of the moſt compleat. You will find him perfect in all the Philoſophy of his time, and, what is his greateſt merit, applying knowledge to its true purpoſe, the advancement of virtue and piety: there is a peculiar ſtrain of goodneſs that runs through all his works. I know, my Lord, that it will pleaſe you as it has charmed me, and that you will love as well as eſteem the Writer who placed his greateſt glory on ſo true a foundation. It is eaſy to diſtinguiſh diligence as well as genius in this Author. You will find, that he ſtudied all that was worth reading of thoſe who went before him, and although you ſee the air of novelty which he has given to his precepts, as he delivers them, you will very often perceive from what ſource they originally ſprung.

I HAVE given up the ſtyle of *Plutarch*, and he ſeems to have given it up himſelf. It is not eaſy to ſay whether he could not have written with more elegance, or whether, intent upon the greater part, the ſubſtance of his work, he neglected the form. You will find, my Lord, a coarſeneſs in his manner; his words are not happily choſen, nor are his periods round or full; there is often a roughneſs in his language, and a ſtrange awkwardneſs in the arrangement of the ſeveral parts of his ſentences, yet it is not always that *Plutarch* is thus reproachable. He ſeems to have written without care as to the

form, yet he has, in some places, arisen to all the heights of eloquence. He is not full of figures, but he has some; and where they appear they are always natural and noble. You will often be unexpectedly charmed, my Lord, with his expression; and where it is most deficient, you will be so intent upon the beauties of a higher kind that you will hardly perceive the defect. You will admire the sentiment while you neglect the language, and your eye will be so fully employed upon the lustre of the stone, that you will not perceive the coarseness of the setting.

BEFORE I close the account of the *Greek* Prose Writers, my Lord, I must recommend to you, in a very particular manner one of the most extravagant but the most entertaining of them all. You cannot be ignorant, that I am about to mention *Lucian*. You have read many Authors, and you will read many more in order to get at the real History of the earlier times: in *Lucian* you will pick up all that regards the fabulous. He has, in one part or other of his Works, delivered the compleat story of the Gods of his time, but he has not done this with an intent to establish the belief in them, or to do them honour; on the contrary, his purpose throughout the whole seems to have been the contemning and laughing at them, and the rallying those who believed in them. This was a bold attempt at the time when believed: it was nothing less than attacking the religion of his country as false and fabulous. He has been called an unbeliever, and by many other opprobrious names on this occasion; but it

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is not at all to his dishonour. Great respect is due from men to the religion of their country, this is doubtless a general truth, but there may be exceptions. The system established in *Lucian's* time was too absurd for reverence, and indeed merited no better method of being exploded than that of ridicule, by which he attacked it. If he deserved condemnation for not believing in the whole army of Gods that his country worshipped, why *Socrates* lies under the same censure, and probably many of their greatest men who have said nothing about it. *Lucian* agrees with them in this species of Infidelity, if it may be so called, but that is not all, he seems to have paid as little regard to the Philosophy as to the Divinity of those times, and if in one of his Dialogues you believe him of one of the systems, it is an equal chance that in the next you find him in another; nay more, of a quite oppofite one.

MY Lord, true Philosophy has a very strong connexion with true Religion, it is not a wonder that where the one was absurd the other was ridiculous. *Lucian* found the one as imperfect as the other false, and the whole round of the sciences could not have furnished so happy a subject as either for the talents of such an Author. *Lucian* has more wit than all who had written before him or have written since; and he is severer than all other Authors. I can by no means agree with a noble writer, that ridicule is the test of truth; on the contrary, the greatest things are as subject to its misrepresentations as the least; but it is of a certainty the most formidable enemy of error. Raillery was the

the great talent of *Lucian*, none ever poſſeſſed it in a degree at all comparable to him, and he has employed all its ſeverity.

YOU have enough of the talent in yourſelf, my Lord, to value wit in another, but you will not find in this all that you have to prize in *Lucian*. His knowledge is ſurpriſing: he had all the ſcience and all the learning of his times, and he was maſter of a happy manner of expreſſion. His ſtyle is ſimple, but extremely delicate, and he has a perſpicuity which few have equalled: his manner of throwing his ſubjects into dialogue would not have been the moſt eligible, perhaps, for other writers, but he was right in the determination. He knew his own talents, and he has, in this, favoured them in the higheſt degree: the moſt happy dialogue in the world is his, and his repartee, without being forced, is at once the ſharpeſt and the moſt natural that can be imagined. As ſoon as you have read it, you ſeem to yourſelf to have expected it, though you would have had no idea of the turn beforehand. This is that character of true wit, that naturalneſs and ſimplicity which makes every man ſuppoſe he could have ſaid it, though it is only he who has, that in reality could. This is *Lucian*'s talent beyond all men in the world.

THOSE who have ſo formidable a weapon in their hands as the ridicule of *Lucian* furniſhed him with, ſeldom are very reſerved in the employing it. Though you will join with me, my Lord, in applauding the boldneſs with which he attacks the fabled Gods of his time, who while they committed, authoriſed crimes, for ſo the ſtories

ſtances always repreſented them, you will join with me alſo, I am aſſured, in cenſuring him for turning into ridicule the lives and manners of the beſt and greateſt of his countrymen. He who attacked the Gods at that time attacked Religion, and the banter was juſt; but it was by no means fair in the ſame manner, under the covert of attacking the Philoſophy, to make the Philoſophers contemptible. If you will be induced to pardon his raillery againſt the ſurly Cynic, I am ſure you will not juſtify, on the contrary, you will be ſhocked at, his ridiculing *Socrates* and *Plato*. There is a dialogue, indeed, my Lord, in which, without intending it, he treats the divine old man much worſe; he in one place talks of him as devoted to the moſt deteſtable of all vices: but he ſpeaks of the love of boys as familiarly as of that of women, and ſeems rather to have confeſſed himſelf guilty of the ſame crime than to have accuſed *Socrates* of it, or to have thought it one. As there is nothing in Hiſtory to countenance this, my Lord, you will know how to deſpiſe the calumny.

LUCIAN ſeems, my Lord, to have been as unſettled in his Morals as in his Religion, yet he does not appear to have been worſe than other people; the crime with which he tacitly charges *Socrates*, and of which he was himſelf, doubtleſs, guilty, was too common in thoſe days to admit a particular cenſure in regard to him: for the reſt, he ſeems to have been rather a favourer of virtue, for he has drawn ſome virtuous perſons very fairly, and he is not more general in his attacks upon vice and folly, than ſevere in his cha-

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racters of the wicked and the credulous in particular persons.

YOU must not, my Lord, think of comparing *Lucian*, in point of style, with any of the *Greek* Prose Writers whom you will have been reading just before him. Perhaps he was equal to the writing in their way, but his subject was perfectly different, and his manner necessarily as different. He has more variety than any of them, and in many places as much harmony as any. You will find him always proper in his expression, and very happy in the choice of his words, his cadences are musical, and his sentences well divided. You will often find him severe but very seldom coarse. If you condemn his manner any where, it will be when he talks of love; there is a strange wildness in that, but it was the custom of the age. The passion was as high at that time, my Lord, as at this, but they had none of its delicacies.

ALL that I have said of the *Greek* Historians, my Lord, though they have deserved it all and more, must not give you a less favourable opinion of the *Roman*. They are as great in their way as their predecessors, and you will have the satisfaction of seeing the same subject in a new light in their treating it. They have a manner quite different from the others, and as pleasing; and what is the more singular, those *Greeks* who wrote at *Rome* have preserved, with the language, the custom of their country, and have not the *Roman* manner.

IF you will begin with *Salluſt*, you will find ſomething in him quite different from all the *Greek* Hiſtorians. He is as remarkably clear and perſpicuous as *Xenophon*, but then he has the additional grace of conciſeneſs. You have valued the laſt quality in *Thucydides*, but neither is the cloſeneſs of that Author like *Salluſt*'s, nor is he like him in the conſequences. It is not in theſe ſhort expreſſions that *Thucydides* is moſt perſpicuous; on the contrary, the brevity of *Salluſt* is the very thing that gives him his great grace of perſpicuity. He is extremely happy in the arrangement of his words, and notwithſtanding his ſhortneſs is not unharmonious. It will be a great recommendation, my Lord, to ſay, that he is one of the faithfulleſt of Writers: he every where is true in his relation of facts, and, in general, does juſtice to his characters: there does appear a ſingle objection to this, but it is only a ſingle one, it is in regard to *Cicero*. The ſtory of the conſpiracy gave him an opportunity of ſaying a great deal in favour of that Orator, nay, it laid him under a neceſſity of relating many things that could not but tend to the glory of that reſolute oppoſer: but he is ſilent. I do not pretend to juſtify *Salluſt* in this omiſſion. Truth required it of him to ſpeak, and the Writer ought to have been uninfluenced by the animoſities of the private man: but, my Lord, when you know that the Hiſtorian and the Orator were implacable enemies, and that the former had married the divorced wife of the latter, for, my Lord, *Salluſt* took *Terentia* after *Cicero* had repudiated her, you will not wonder that

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natural hate, and the influence of a revengeful woman, should have made him partial.

SET aside this single circumstance, and you will find *Sallust* faithful in the highest degree, and more than faithful, wise, cunning, and discerning. No man ever entered more happily into the depths of the human heart, or more successfully fathomed the seas of human policy; he not only gives you the actions, but the motives that influenced those who were the actors. In no Author, my Lord, will you read History with so much advantage, since while you are going over the events, you are seeing also into their causes.

YOU must not wonder that I have placed *Sallust* at the head of the *Roman* Historians. His plan was less extensive than that of some of the others, but it is great and important, and he has most of all Writers preserved its dignity by not admitting little incidents a place among those of moment. All that he wrote has not travelled down to us, so that those who value writers by the quantity, will wonder to see the rank I have allowed him; but your Lordship, who remembers that not only the Poets, but the succeeding Historians of his own country, have preferred him to all others, will not dispute the propriety of his place. You will know, my Lord, how memorable events the conspiracy of *Catiline*, and the war of *Jugurtha* are in the *Roman* story. You may read of them elsewhere, but you will never understand them but by reading *Sallust* with that care which he deserves: others will tell you of the more considerable

siderable parts of each, but it is in *Sallust* only that you see the whole scene laid open, and know not only that such things happened, but why and how they happened. Throughout the whole you are in the cabinet and the camp, you are in the designs of the Generals, you are in the secrets of the Conspirators, and if you are less surprised at the events, it is because you are acquainted with their causes, and every secret spring of action. You will find more of life, and warmth, and fire, in *Sallust*, than in all the writers of History among the *Romans*; you will remember *Thucydides* as you read him, and you will discover that this was the Writer on whom he had formed himself; I am sorry to say that he has even excelled his model, but *Seneca* has affirmed it, and it is truth. This is not all you will discover on comparing this most spirited of the *Roman* Writers, to that most spirited among the *Grecians*, you will find that brevity is the very life and fire which charms you.

To be succinct is a great praise to *Sallust*, but he has a greater, the being accurate and punctual: no Author has equalled him in this, perhaps he has even carried the virtue to a fault. If it is possible to be too circumstantial in the description of places, *Sallust* is so: but I don't know whether to charge this upon him as an error: there is however a fault in him which, my Lord, I know you will distinguish. Tho' *Sallust* is always close and short when he is got into his story, he is sometimes tedious before he does get into it. His introductions have been condemned on all hands, and there is no vindicating them. They are tedious, and they are

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foreign to the matter, and like *Bays*'s Prologue and Epilogue, each might ſerve either for the one or the other, or they might all have been prefixed to any other books as well as theſe. We are diſguſted with any thing that keeps us from the ſtory, and I can remember that even in a matter of amuſement, your Lordſhip long ſince objected to the introductory chapters in *Tom Jones* as impertinent, though they were ſome of them not foreign to the purpoſe of the ſucceeding part of the narration. When you ſee what is diſguſtful in others, my Lord, you will avoid it. I had not mentioned this fault in *Salluſt*, but that it may ſerve for an example. All prefaces and introductions to ſpeeches before that aſſembly who will one day hear you, my Lord, be aſſured will prove as tedious, as cold, as diſtaſteful, and as impertinent, as you now find the prefaces of *Salluſt*, or the introductory chapters of *Fielding*. Do as you wiſh they had done: plunge at once into the midſt of the buſineſs, and leave form to thoſe who want matter.

You have heard *Salluſt* condemned, I dare ſay, my Lord, for the length and finiſhed excellence of his ſpeeches, but you will not join the common cry of cenſure: if this be a fault it is common to *Livy* and all the reſt, not particular to *Salluſt*; but I do not allow that it is one. *Rapin* may pleaſe himſelf with the novelty of his obſervation, that Soldiers do not declaim like Orators. But I cannot ſee why we ſhould ſuppoſe any of thoſe characters, into the mouths of which *Salluſt* has put ſpeeches, incapable of ſpeaking them. *Longinus* obſerves, that not only

only great men are the moſt likely to ſay great things, but that none elſe can ſay them. He inſtances the reply of *Alexander* to *Parmenio*, who had told him, "That were he *Alexander* he would accept the offer of *Darius*," as an inſtance of this; and he is right: the Monarch anſwered, "and ſo would I, were I *Parmenio*:" you will agree with *Longinus*, my Lord, that no man in the world was more likely to have made ſuch an anſwer as the Conqueror of the world.

ALL that can be objected to theſe ſpeeches is, that they are too much finiſhed; but, my Lord, the ſentiments of them all, I mean of all thoſe in *Salluſt*, are proper: and you will pardon the relator of them, who puts them into language worthy of the occaſion, and of the ſpeakers. I am ready to acknowledge, that there are among the *Latin* Writers, to ſay nothing of the *Greek*, thoſe who take occaſion to introduce fine things very foreign to the purpoſe, into theſe harangues, and who ſeem to conſider the ſubject of their Hiſtory, as ſome Poets have done the plot of their Play, as good for nothing but to introduce fine things; but *Salluſt* is not of that number: you will find, my Lord, the loftieſt ſentiments, and the moſt exalted and noble morals in his harangues, but they are always born of the occaſion.

THERE are many reaſons, why you will be fond of *Cæſar*. Much more: you will reverence thoſe writings which you remember were penned by the Conqueror of the world; and while you pay this deference to the quality of the Author, there is another circumſtance

ſtance of great weight that will affect you in his favour; you will find him relating things in which himſelf was concerned; events in which he cannot be ignorant of any circumſtance, and which is a greater praiſe, in which, although his own glory is concerned, he is not partial.

THERE is no Writer, my Lord, whom you will read, or whom you ought to read, with more pleaſure than *Cæſar*. His language is accurate and elegant beyond that of all the other *Roman* Hiſtorians. He has all the beautiful ſimplicity of *Xenophon*, for be aſſured, my dear Lord, *Xenophon* was his model; and he is as clear and as elegantly plain. When he has occaſion to deſcribe any place, or any machine, of the number of thoſe he conquered, or of thoſe he uſed in his expeditions, it is impoſſible to conceive any thing more circumſtantially particular than the account; when he has occaſion to ſpeak of himſelf with honour, you will do him a thouſand times the honour on account of the reſerve and decency with which he expreſſes it. You will not wonder, my Lord, that when there is occaſion for it, *Cæſar* is eloquent: long before he began to write as an Hiſtorian, he was an Orator. Very early in life he ſpoke againſt *Dolabella*; but although he loſt many friends on this occaſion, he obtained an applauſe that to his warm temper was an ample compenſation. He went on the ſame road to fame, and with the ſame ſucceſs, to the great affair of *Lentulus*, in which his heat and eloquence raiſed a ſuſpicion, but certainly a falſe one, that himſelf had been concerned in *Catiline's* conſpiracy.

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THE ſame ſpirit that animated his Orations glows in all his other Works. You every where ſee that it is not a cold relator, but an intereſted perſon who is informing you; and, my Lord, I am aſſured that you will applaud that openneſs of manner in which you diſtinguiſh the Prince and the Commander, as well as the man of knowledge and of learning, in his language. Here, my Lord, is certainly a proof of what I before obſerved to you in favour of *Salluſt*, and indeed it may be extended to all the Hiſtorians in the matter of thoſe harangues which they put into the Mouths of their Generals. It will be eaſy to allow, that the world never produced a greater Soldier than *Cæſar*, and you will ſoon find, that none has publiſhed harangues which he would have been unequal to the ſpeaking. It was not ill obſerved, that *Cæſar* wrote with the ſame ſpirit with which he fought; and where, my Lord, is the wonder? Are they not the ſame qualities and powers of mind that lead to both? And muſt not a noble warmth and ſtrength of faculties diſcloſe itſelf in the one as well as the other? *Cæſar* has vindicated the characters of all the Generals of old time, and given credit to all their Hiſtorians.

YOU are not to expect, my Lord, a compleat and finiſhed Hiſtory in the Commentaries of *Julius Cæſar*. Great as they are, and highly as they have exalted the name of that Conqueror, they are no more than minutes or notes of things put down with an intent to furniſh matter for a Hiſtory. Thoſe writings in which we ſee the Orator, the Hiſtorian, and the man of learning con-

conſpicuous in ſo eminent a degree, are no more than the firſt copies of what might have been his Hiſtory. If we thus admire what his Writings are, what ſhould we have ſaid were it poſſible for us to have ſeen them finiſhed by his own hand.

I DON'T know whether you will more admire the vigour of his mind or the purity of his language: whether the matter or the form will demand your greateſt praiſe; certainly he is unequalled in both. The force of his genius ſeems more than common; and the ſtyle in which he has clothed its dictates, is more pure than that of any of the others. You will ſee great pomp and oſtentation in the manner of *Tacitus*, but I know your judgment, my Lord; I know you will ſee more real dignity in the ſimplicity of *Cæſar*, than in all the ſounding phraſes he can put together. Notwithſtanding that all the powers of language were within the reach of *Cæſar*, he knew that reſerve under which alone they are beautiful. Though you will diſtinguiſh a concealed grandeur under many paſſages which have all the plainneſs of the moſt ſimple relation, yet it is not every where that you diſcover this. He knew when all that real plainneſs would be proper, which you imagine you have throughout his Writings. It is only when he is relating councils or actions that he gives the reins to this noble fury. Where he is barely relating incidents of no immediate importance, it is impoſſible for any thing to be more abſolutely plain and unornamented than his language: he has been cenſured for this, my Lord, but you, who have judgment enough at any time to allow propriety all the praiſe of beauty, will think theſe

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parts, though leſs entertaining to the reader, yet not leſs worthy of the Writer than the reſt.

IF *Cornelius Nepos* wants the fire and ſpirit, the dignity and the eloquence of *Cæſar*, he will make you good amends, my Lord, by his perfect accuracy. If he is not as rapid as *Thucydides*, he is as regular as *Iſocrates*. And though he has all the merit of the *Greek*, he has nothing of his ſtiffneſs. I ſcarce know an Author, whom you will read with greater pleaſure than this; he is eaſy and elegant in a very great degree; and what there is deficient in ſtrength and force he makes up in taſte. *Cornelius Nepos*, my Lord, has aimed at fame on a foundation different from that on which the other *Roman* Hiſtorians have built their pretenſions. I can find great beauty and dignity in the laboured periods and ſounding epithets of *Tacitus*, and I have already told you, how greatly I think of the conciſeneſs of *Salluſt*. But though I may admire theſe more, I certainly am, and your Lordſhip as certainly will be, more pleaſed with reading *Cornelius Nepos*. The language of this Author is that which men of learning and ſenſe in his time would have wiſhed to ſpeak to one another. There is neither amazing dignity nor ſurpriſing ſharpneſs in it, but there is an unaffected ſimplicity and elegant eaſe which diſtinguiſhes him from all the Authors in the world, and which, without farther information, would aſſure us evidently enough, that he lived in that age when more than the *Latin* tongue was in its perfection, when true taſte was eſtabliſhed.

THOUGH there are no laboured beauties in the ſtyle of this Author, there are a thouſand natural ones, and if he wants eloquence he has variety: his expreſſion is always appropriated, and the ſubject gives the character to the ſtyle. All his eaſe does not amount to negligence, and thoſe periods which are leaſt ſounding are often the moſt laboured.

LIVY had all the advantages, my Lord, which *Nepos* poſſeſſed, and he had many more. Nature had given him all thoſe talents which it was the buſineſs of art to improve, and he had acquainted himſelf with every thing that could tend to their improvement. You will at once diſtinguiſh, that *Livy* lived in the *Auguſtan* age, and you will no where have ſo general or ſo happy a picture of what that refined taſte, that pure judgment, that eaſy eloquence, and thoſe unaffected graces were, which have characteriſed and ſhall continue to characteriſe that age to all time, as in the works of this Author. You have admired many writers, my Lord, for many things, but it is the peculiar happineſs of *Livy* to excel in all. Whether his ſubject requires force or delicacy, whether he is to perſuade or to command, whether an army is to be ſpirited to ſome deſperate attempt, or a ſenate to be ſoftened into ſome neceſſary compliance, *Livy* is equally excellent. The perſuaſive or the majeſtic, the ſoft or the violent, ſeem, while you read them, to be his peculiar ſtrength, and you are ſurpriſed when you find him fall as naturally and as boldly into the next ſucceeding turn, though ever ſo different.

VARIETY pleaſes in *Cornelius Nepos*, but it aſtoniſhes and charms in *Livy*. The accuracy of the one is elegant, but even the arrangement of words in the other is great. You have applauded many, and you have felt their excellencies, but there is none but *Livy* who can command your paſſions juſt in the degree and exactly in the inſtant when he pleaſes: you are at once awed and inſpired by the grandeur of his ſtyle, and while you follow his ſentences, you know not whether to pay your tribute of wonder and applauſe to thoſe who did the great actions, or to him who relates them. The dignity of *Livy*'s manner is peculiar; but if what *Longinus* ſays of the ſublime be true, that it is what pleaſes at all times, and pleaſes every body, and that its peculiar character is the awakening the ſoul and commanding extacy, not ſolliciting a cold applauſe; no man has written with more ſublimity than *Livy*, whoſe works have pleaſed theſe two thouſand years, and have pleaſed univerſally, and whom no man ever read without tranſport. No Author has ever written with that peculiar propriety that appears in *Livy*, other Authors when they are ſublime often wander for the occaſions of it; with *Livy* you never read it but you are convinced it is at once great and natural. Sublimer thoughts never entered into the heart of man than we meet with in him, and yet they are always the natural thoughts of thoſe into whoſe mouth he puts them: no language was ever more worthy to convey ſuch ſentiments than that in which he clothes them, and yet there is nothing forced in it; on the contrary, it ſeems

born of the occaſion, and peculiar to the ſubject.

PROPRIETY is the great character of *Livy*; he is not more happy in ſuiting his ſtyle to his ſentiments, or his ſentiments to his characters, than in his general conduct in the arrangement of his matter. Other Hiſtorians are great, but they are ſometimes tireſome: you will be raviſhed, my Lord, with many things in *Thucydides*, but you will be tired as he continues the relation. On the contrary, in *Livy* whatever is not great is elegant, and every part of his writings afford you an equal, though every part a different pleaſure. The mind is wearied with an attention to the ſame things, or to things of the ſame kind, and it is the misfortune of all thoſe Writers whom we admire moſt, that they expect we ſhould admire them continually: the human mind is not equal to the taſk, and the attempt is always abortive. If we obſerve the Writers of Tragedy, they have found the art of diverſifying the ſcene, and when a great action has been repreſented, they throw in leſs to relax and to unbend the mind, that it may regain all its vigour for the next occurrence, and be in a condition to admire it as it ought. *Livy* has been in the ſecret of this variety in Hiſtory, and only *Livy* has known it. All who read him, and who have read the others, are ſenſible of his ſuperior art in pleaſing as well as aſtoniſhing, his peculiar addreſs in keeping awake the attention, but all who admire do not ſee the reaſon; you, my Lord, I know will approve with knowledge. You will ſee that *Livy* has had the Poets art of varying his ſubject, and of relieving and

entertaining by variety. When you have had all your faculties kept upon the ſtretch by ſome great occurrence, he relieves them by ſome little but ſome pleaſing incident, and when he has given you all the pain and the ſorrow you could beſtow upon the ſubject, he always throws in ſome incident not ſprightly, for that would be a farce after the tragedy, but ſome ſoothing and engaging circumſtance that calls off but in part, while it wholly relieves the attention.

I AM ſorry to confeſs, my Lord, but I have confeſſed it already in regard to ſome of thoſe Writers whom we moſt admire, that with their vaſt genius there was required ſome greater, ſome ſeverer judgment. *Herodotus* is often puerile, *Thucydides* is ſometimes bombaſt, even *Cæſar* is in ſome places low; but you have nothing of this kind in *Livy*: no man was ever ſo equal to himſelf in all parts. He has often checked the torrent even of his eloquence when it was out of place; and having leſs ambition, as well as more judgment, than *Demoſthenes*, if he has not equalled that Orator in his amazing paſſages, he has not imitated him in his weak and his impertinent ones.

I NAME theſe men, my Lord, as examples that may, and that muſt, be of uſe to you, in your future conduct. Let me, of all things, recommend this *Roman* as your pattern in point of judgment. You will have, like him, I am aſſured, an exuberant fancy, and, my Lord, you will have need of his ſkill to guide it. Be not always haſty to ſay things which you know to be good ones. The reſerve of *Livy* has added

almoſt as much to his fame, as his genius. You ſee in the weak parts of *Demoſthenes* that lowneſs to which the greateſt man may deſcend if he will affect wit and pleaſantry out of time: be aſſured, my Lord, *Livy* could have ſaid many more ſmart things than he has, but he determined to give breath to none that were not alſo proper.

IT is become a faſhion, my dear Lord, to admire, but the word carries too much meaning, it is the cuſtom to approve ſhort periods. Thoſe Writers who have eſtabliſhed this principle were right; when you have read them, my Lord, you will find that they had not talents for a ſuperior excellence. Short ſentences are eaſy, but long, I mean moderately long periods, alone can claim the name of beautiful; there requires art for the ſtructure of theſe, for without it they are full of confuſion; but, my Lord, he who can retain perſpicuity through a continued paſſage, he who knows how to vary and to combine its ſeveral members, and to arrange the words ſo as to communicate, together with the clearneſs, grace to the whole, he alone deſerves the name of an eloquent Author: he alone can write with dignity; and him all who know what is great and excellent in writing will ſelect for their applauſe. Such a Writer, my Lord, is *Livy*. *Salluſt* has found the way to make conciſeneſs pleaſe, but it can never charm like the full meaſure of this Writer. The language flows along theſe lengthened channels with an eaſy ſmoothneſs that you trace it from ſpot to ſpot without diſturbance, and though it makes meanders, every part of them is ſo diſtinct that you continue the eye along the ſurface, and the whole is ſo clear that it is impoſſible

impoſſible to do this without ſeeing at the ſame time to the bottom.

No man ſeems to have been ſo well acquainted with human nature as this Hiſtorian, whatever judgment he paſſes the heart confirms, and while we admire we ſee the beauty ſo obvious that we almoſt chide ourſelves for not having hit upon it: but, my Lord, the thought and the conduct of the ſtory is not all you will find to admire in *Livy*, nor is the length and ſtructure of his periods all that contributes to the giving that divine perfection which we ſee in them: with all the greater, he was a maſter alſo of all the leſſer arts of writing; his choice of words is excellent beyond all compariſon. He is always great, but it is not an affected dignity which you will ſee in him, it is natural; and you will the more admire him as you confeſs that it is ſo. No Author has an equal air of nobleneſs in his compoſition, and yet he is chaſter than all men in his expreſſion, he will not give place to a beauty that is not ſuited to the character under which it appears: nor admit a fine thing which does not grow upon the ſubject. On this principle *Livy* has, undoubtedly, thrown away more good things than any man elſe ever wrote; but, in return, thoſe which he has preſerved come upon the reader with a grace which is wanting in all others.

NONE has been ſo ſublime, and however ſtrange the aſſertion may ſeem, none has been ſo correct as *Livy*. That care to little things which the *Greek* Critic declares impoſſible to thoſe who are purſuing true ſublimity, is certainly, tho'

againſt the determination of ſo great a judge, ſeen in *Livy*. While he produces the greateſt things that ever came from the pen of man he has regard to the leaſt. While he is delivering ſentiments which inſpire the reader, he takes care they be peculiar to the perſon from whom they are heard. Every character in *Livy* is what all the perſons I had like to have ſaid are, but it is what all the perſons ought to be in a Play: each furniſhed with his own manners, and each diſtinguiſhed by his own peculiar ſentiments, ſo that without aſking the name, you may know who ſpeaks. This is happily, and with the moſt diſtinguiſhed accuracy hit off by *Livy*. Not only his *Romans* and his men of other nations ſpeak and think differently: but his *Romans* differ among one another, according to the periods in which they lived. Not only the *Roman* is diſtinguiſhed by his ſentiments and manner from all the other people of the world, but the *Roman* under one form of government is made to ſpeak differently from him under another. He has adapted his characters to his times, and as there was more liberty among the people, he has communicated more ſpirit to their harangues. It is that judgment, that conſummate diſcernment of the proper and the peculiar to every perſon, and in every part, that has made him eminent in this particular; and it is to the ſame judgment that we owe that tempered fire which animates his greater paſſages, and that enlivened eaſe which elevates the familiar. No man was ever great with ſo much eaſe, none was ever familiar with ſo much dignity as *Livy*. He had frequent occaſions to exert his talents on both theſe occaſions, and he has communicated ſo much of majeſty

jeſty to the leſſer incidents, and ſo happily ſoften-ed the air of grandeur in the greater, that both at once pleaſe and elevate the mind, and each, while it in part imitates, ſets off the other in the compariſon.

I HAVE ſpoken largely on this Author, my Lord, but it is impoſſible to ſay too much in his favour. I have propoſed the Claſſics to your imitation in forming a ſtyle ſuited to the aſſembly before whom you will ſpeak; and to the importance of the concerns that will be the ſubjects of your diſcourſe: in many things you may imitate many, but *Livy*, my Lord, you may take for your pattern in all; where he is grave and great none can be more ſo; he is often light, but he never deſcends to littleneſs; and where his eaſe is moſt conſpicuous he is never careleſs.

I HAVE obſerved to you, my Lord, that the Claſſics, in general, were acquainted in the moſt perfect manner with thoſe things concerning which they wrote; that they had been concerned in what they related, or had travelled to viſit the places which they deſcribed. Let not this, however, make you ſuppoſe that perſonal experience, and immediate inſpection, are abſolutely neceſſary to the taſk of writing, or of ſpeaking nobly on the ſubject; nor let your modeſty plead your inexperience as an excuſe againſt your ſpeaking at all. There is another way, my Lord, of arriving at theſe things, and you have this great name as an example of the perfection in which they may be attained by ſtudy. *Livy* had not travelled far,

nor had he been honoured with many employments; yet, my Lord, when you have read him you will confeſs, not one of all thoſe who had the ſuperior advantages have profited more of their experience.

I HAVE told you, my Lord, that I would propoſe *Livy* as a general model of your imitation; but you will not find any thing human abſolutely perfect. As to the defects in his language and ſtyle, you are not to fear any. What that *Patavinity* was of which ſome of his cotemporaries accuſe him, we are not likely at this time to find out; it was ſome matter of great delicacy, and neither poſſible to be now known, nor worth the trouble of the enquiry; but, my dear Lord, guard againſt partiality; guard againſt credulity; and if you ſee inſtances of theſe in *Livy*, remember who he was, and know it is impoſſible to be too much upon your guard againſt thoſe errors into which ſuch a man could fall. If what we have beſide relating to the ſame time be juſt, *Livy* has favoured *Pompey* at the expence of ſtrict truth: and for the other charge, altho' the ignorance and ſuperſtition of thoſe times in ſome degree pleaded in mitigation of the belief in portents and miracles, you will find in *Livy* that he was much too eaſy of conviction on that head; and you will remember, my Lord, that as nothing can diſgrace a great character more than ſuch a tendency, ſo at the time in which we live, in which religion as well as knowledge is on ſo juſt a foundation, a credulity of this kind would render the perſon who gave way to it doubly ridiculous. I know, my dear Lord, when I have told you that *Livy* is, in general, too credulous,

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your own judgment will ſave me the invidious taſk of pointing out the particulars: upon the whole, he may be placed in the ſtead of half the *Roman* and half the *Greek* Hiſtorians. If he have faults, but they do not deſerve that name, if he have weakneſſes, they are few, and in return he has excellencies more and greater than any Author can boaſt. The *Roman* Hiſtory was a ſubject worthy the greateſt pen that ever wrote; and it would be hard to ſay in whom it would have met a more equal genius than in him from whom it is delivered.

AFTER this praiſe of *Livy*, and after what has been allowed to *Salluſt*, leſs will be neceſſary in regard to the other *Roman* Hiſtorians. You will read in *Velleius Paterculus* a ſuccinct and uſeful compendium of the affairs of *Rome* from its earlieſt period to *Tiberius*. He is an uſeful Writer, nor is that all his praiſe. There is an eaſe and elegance in his language which ought to recommend him to you, and a delicacy in his cenſures, which is an art few Orators have reached, and yet of all others the moſt worthy their attention. Thoſe who have been in the ſecret have profited of it, but it has died with them, nor ever has been plainly laid down among the rules for this profeſſion. My Lord, I flatter myſelf you will be very ſlow to cenſure: great minds diſdain the trampling upon leſſer; but, there may be occaſions in which it will be virtue to be ſevere upon particular perſons: if ever this happens, let me be remembered in having adviſed *Paterculus* as the model. He who is angry loſes half his power; and to be violent is to accuſe yourſelf of partiality or prejudice.

PATERCULUS always kept his temper, and is ſedate and calm in his ſevereſt cenſures. Thoſe who attempt too much loſe all. *Paterculus* is not backward to allow merit in thoſe whom he condemns, in points that are foreign to the immediate buſineſs; and when he cuts the deepeſt affects an air of ſoftneſs and an unwilling ſeverity. Theſe are the men who are regarded in their cenſures. When you would wound the deepeſt, my Lord, do it as it were with violence to your own temper, and you will obtain all that you can intend: much more, you will do all the common good you can propoſe, and, at the ſame time, preſerve your own name from the ſtain of ill-nature.

I WISH I could tell you, my Lord, that *Paterculus* was as good an example of the way to praiſe, but in this he is as faulty as in the other excellent. He who is of all men the moſt candid in his cenſures, is of all the moſt fulſome in his praiſe. When you read of *Auguſtus*, you will ſuppoſe he is ſpeaking of a Deity, and in ſome other caſes he thinks it a duty to praiſe not only the Prince, but the miniſter or favourite. We find *Sejanus* extolled with ſuch applauſe, as the conduct of a *Pelham* could hardly warrant; and ſome of the weak men of *Rome* mentioned with all the glory of the greateſt whom that miſtreſs of the world ever produced. I would not have you, my Lord, ſet the Author, however, too low on this account, it was a kind of neceſſary flattery. He wrote of thoſe times in which he lived, and it was not to be expected that he would

would do other than praiſe thoſe whom he feared.

THIS Author has a peculiar happineſs in telling a ſtory: his brevity, which the plan of his work rendered neceſſary, is a great beauty, but he takes care to throw into the ſmall compaſs all the graces it can contain; and what he is greatly to be eſteemed as well as admired for, he generally gives a moral to his ſtory, and ends with ſome happy maxim. The cenſure which I have laid upon him for partiality, my Lord, you are not to conſider as general, but only relating to the latter part of his Hiſtory. You will find him very faithful in the relations of all that occurred before the time in which he was concerned, and I don't indeed know a more uſeful Author. You will find a recital, in him, of all the memorable things you have read in the other Hiſtorians, and you will find him every where clear and familiar. Remember you are not to take his characters of any of the people of his own time upon his word, and for the reſt he will not deceive you. Men of his own period are praiſed or cenſured by him, not as virtuous or as vicious, but as friends or as enemies to *Tiberius*.

THERE is a pleaſure to the man of diſcernment in obſerving the different ways in which the great Writers of this early period aroſe to fame: every one is excellent, yet every one on a different principle. You have admired the placid eaſe and gentle elegance of *Paterculus*, you will more admire, though perhaps not more ſolidly

ſolidly approve, the gay, the florid, and the ſhining Hiſtorian of *Alexander*.

QUINTUS CURTIUS ſeems to have been of a ſpirit in ſome degree reſembling that of the heroe whom he celebrates; and in his praiſes he does not always found his applauſe where a cooler judgment would have placed it. You will find him extolling *Alexander* to the ſkies for reſolutions which a man of prudence could not have taken: but intrepidity and fire are the character of his heroe, and in order to ſet his praiſe at the higheſt point, he makes theſe the greateſt honour to human nature. Never was an undertaking better ſuited to the talents and abilities of the performer, than the ſtory of this Conqueror of the World to the genius of *Curtius*. He is as ſpirited, as warm, and as reſolute as his heroe, and, my Lord, when others praiſe him moſt, I know your judgment will ſay he is as raſh. You will often be pleaſed with his flights, but you will leave it to others to be always raviſhed with them. There is a peculiar turn in his whole manner which pleaſes while it animates the reader. He has a lofty eaſe unknown to all the *Greeks*, or to the other *Romans*. He is bold in his uſe of figures, ſometimes too bold; he is always clear and perſpicuous, and his judgment in his opinions is as ſound as his manner is flighty. There is no Proſe Writer in which you will find ſo much of fancy; but you will ſee that his fancy ſometimes runs away with him. He takes from the real character of his heroe by his extravagant applauſe, and not unfrequently makes us doubt things by his mere manner of relating them.

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YOU muſt not ſuppoſe, my dear Lord, that all this exuberance of applauſe was owing to a partiality for his heroe, on the contrary, he has ſpoken as fully on the other ſide: you will no where find the character of *Alexander* treated with that degree of freedom which appears in this Writer. He relates things of the wrong kind for a panegyriſt, and thoſe ſuch as we no where elſe find, and ſuch as would have ſcarce obtained credit if they had appeared in any other work. If he places him above the greateſt of mankind in many places, he makes the human ſpecies amends by ſetting him in ſome others lower than the level of almoſt the loweſt.

I AM ſenſible, my Lord, that you will be pleaſed with this Writer. There is an air of life, and pleaſantry, and freedom in him, that muſt charm every reader of capacity, but he is the laſt that I would adviſe you to ſet up as a model to yourſelf. He has faults, and they are ſuch as wear ſo pleaſing an aſpect, that they would propoſe themſelves in the firſt place for imitation. Even where himſelf is above cenſure, he would lead others into errors. He has dared very happily in ſome places, but not in all; and even where the bridge has carried him ſafe over it would fail under another. You will find that he wants that beautiful ſimplicity which is conſpicuous in almoſt all the other Claſſics, and which is the firſt and greateſt of all excellencies. The language of *Quintus Curtius* is often too loſty for his ſubject, and he is fond of declamation to a fault, even to impertinence. He knew his ſtrength lay there, and he has called in this form

form of ſpeaking much too often. He has been happy in many places in the uſe of figures, but not knowing where to confine himſelf, he has treſpaſſed alſo in that reſpect in many places, and while he labours to be fine, he ceaſes to be natural. You will find great elegance in his Orations, and a fine flow of language, but then you will remember the propriety of thoſe of *Livy*, and theſe will come with an ill grace after them: they may, in general, ſuit the mouth of one perſon as well as another. You will find ſo many beauties in him, that I know you will be in pain for thoſe who may be led by them to reverence his faults, but to your Lordſhip thoſe faults will ſerve as well as his excellencies, to point out the way to what is truly eminent.

IN *Petronius Arbiter* you will find, all the fire and fancy of *Quintus Curtius*, but tempered with the niceſt judgment. The elegance of his ſtyle ſuits well with that of his ſentiments. You will in no Writer, my dear Lord, meet with ſo much true delicacy of thought, in none with purer language. You will eaſily ſee that he had lived in a Court, and been many years accuſtomed to ſee with a diſcerning and nice eye the perſons who are found there. You will be charmed with the eaſe, and you will be ſurpriſed with the variety of his characters. There is no end of the number, no reſtraint in the kind of people he introduces, and yet he ſeems as perfectly acquainted with the genius and character of the one as the other. You will find in him a happy contraſt to the careleſſneſs and want of propriety that is ſeen in *Quintus Curtius*: as the ſpeeches in that Author

which

which come from one mouth would as well have ſuited another, thoſe of *Petronius*, on the contrary, are ſo characteriſed that, without naming the perſon, you muſt know who ſpoke them, and they would be abſurd in the mouth of any other. There is no quality which he does not occaſionally aſſume, no manner that he does not put on in theſe Orations, to adapt them to the perſon whoſe they are; nor is this all his happineſs in variety. When he is engaged in deſcription and narration, when he is himſelf the ſpeaker, he has as admirable an art of enlivening his language by theſe changes: in ſome places he is as ſimple as *Xenophon*, in ſome as florid as *Curtius*; in ſome as ſhort as *Salluſt*, and in others as beautifully copious as *Herodotus*: and all this with propriety. It does not appear that he makes theſe variations of ſtyle becauſe he is in a graver or in a gayer humour, but as each part of his ſubject requires a more dry or a more ornamented language. You will be aſtoniſhed at the wit, you will be charmed with the politeneſs of *Petronius*, and in the moſt difficult and delicate of all attempts, the diſguiſing looſe ideas in decent words, you will ſoon acknowledge no man was ever like him.

YOU will not wonder, my Lord, that *Petronius* ſhould be happy in his ſtyle and expreſſion, when you conſider that no man had ſtudied it ſo carefully. He lays down excellent rules for others to arrive at the ſame perfection, and is ſevere enough againſt thoſe who tranſgreſs them. I don't know any thing that is more univerſally pleaſing in an Author than humour, and hardly know any Author who has more of it, or who is

more

more delicate in it than *Petronius*. If he has any fault, it is that his ſpirit ſometimes runs away with him, and that he paints ill things ſo agreeably that you will at firſt ſight be tempted to like rather than be diſguſted at them. You will elſewhere have read of the times of *Nero*, my Lord, but it is only in *Petronius* that you will ſee the true moral hiſtory of that ſhameleſs period.

THE ſtyle of *Tacitus*, my Lord, is different from that of all the Authors you have read, and though not without its beauty, yet is not that which one would wiſh to imitate: or indeed is it that kind of language which is proper for his ſubject. This is a cenſure of ſome weight, but you will find it juſt. He is in general conciſe, but then he is not always clear: his language is laboured-ly ſhort; and as it has the origin has the conſequence of *Horace*'s obſervation, *brevis eſſe laboro, obſcurus fio*. He has beauties, and thoſe very great and very ſtriking, but they are not regular or continued; you will find him dropping from very high and very judicious flights into the ſimpleſt manner in the world; and then riſing from it again at once, and when you did not expect, nor did the ſubject require it. I am aſſured, that even his beſt paſſages will not have your praiſe without ſome degree of reſerve. His language, though lofty, is laboured, and his figures are rather bold than juſt: he would have obtained a better character had he aimed at leſs excellence; for you often ſee his metaphors forced, and his expreſſion ſtrained to an unnatural height: he is ambitious of ſhining every where, and the Writer who affects this will often miſs of it.

UPON

UPON the whole, my Lord, *Tacitus* is an Author who would be the laſt I ſhould propoſe as a pattern of ſpeaking; and I ſhould be ſorry to think of your Lordſhip's reading him before you had eſtabliſhed a true taſte by the example of other Authors; but after ſo many, I would by no means have you omit him. You will know where to condemn him, and you will find a vaſt deal to approve. His faults ariſe not from a want of power, but of moderation; not from a deficiency of genius, but of judgment. When he is cooler, he has none of his improprieties; and in thoſe places (and there are many ſuch) in which he chooſes to deſcend from his exaltation, there is not an Author among the *Romans* who writes with greater beauty. He is in general fond of flights, and ſacrifices propriety to beauty, but in ſome places he is correct, elegant, and natural. His characters are glaring rather than beautiful, and as they are not natural, they can never truly pleaſe: he takes infinitely more pains to be elegant and bright than to be like nature, and all his pictures, though he puts names to them, and calls them portraits, are rather pieces of fancy.

I WISH I could recommend the principles of *Tacitus* to your Lordſhip with any greater degree of warmth than his manner; but he is certainly faulty in the one as well as the other. He is evidently a deep politician, but he is not an honeſt one: the praiſes which he beſtows upon addreſs and cunning, ſhew the light in which he held thoſe diſgraces of true policy. You will find, in a little time, that he had no great reverence

rence for the religion of his country, and be assured, my Lord, he who sacrifices that will not long retain his moral character. You will like the meaning of *Tacitus* always better than his expression: in the one he is always just, and if he had employed a proper reserve in the other, few would have excelled him. I don't know a more useful example for a rising genius than that of the misapplication of great talents, and that you will see, my Lord, very strong in *Tacitus*. I wish you possessed of his powers, but remember the necessity of a reserve in the use of them.

You will be struck with the style of *Lucius Florus* yet more than with that of *Tacitus*: he is less exalted and extravagant, but he is infinitely more full of poetic fancy. A great part of his works have the appearance of poetry just deranged or thrown out of measure, and in some places hardly that. *Livy*, I know you must have observed, sometimes runs into Hexameters, but *Florus* is full of parts of verse. He is more an Orator than an Historian, and is fond of declamation and of all the singularities of poetry in it. He is more florid than *Tacitus*, and his flights sit easier upon him: there is at once a sweetness and a wildness in his manner which, though out of the common style of prose, cannot but please; and he has a spirit and strength of sentiment that support all his flights of poetic fancy. You will read him with pleasure, but it is not safe to place too much confidence in his relations. He often sacrifices the real circumstances of an action to those which he thinks would better have becom'd it; and he is so careless in matter of time, that you will often discover him strangely faulty.

Florus,

Florus, my dear Lord, ſhould have written verſe: all that is defect in his works as they ſtand, would have been allowable, and much of it would have been beautiful there. His writings contain a ſuccinct Hiſtory of the *Roman* Empire. They would not be proper for a perſon to imbibe his firſt Rudiments from; but to your Lordſhip, who will ſo well know where to believe and where to diſregard the Author in point of information, they will be both uſeful and entertaining. His work has a very ſmall allowance of quantity for the comprehending the ſtory of the *Roman* Empire from *Romulus* to *Trajan*; but he has ſo contrived it that he has omitted ſcarce any thing of conſequence, and with all their ſhortneſs, his relations are not dry. He has thrown in the graces of language in too great profuſion; but while you condemn him for this, you will acknowledge that the aptneſs of his obſervations will implant many things in the memory that would have ſlipped it under a leſs ornamented relation.

MANY would be more pleaſed with theſe florid Writers than with the plain *Suetonius*; but that, my Lord, will not be your caſe. You will know that plainneſs is a firſt beauty in Hiſtory, and you will no where ſee it more advantageouſly employed than in this Author. He has the leaſt affectation of ſaying fine things, and the leaſt partiality in his relations of all the *Roman* Hiſtorians. You are not to expect in *Suetonius*, a formal and regular recital of all that happened in the *Roman* world, according to the exact order of time in which the things occurred: this was not his ſcheme. He takes up his

ſtory

ſtory where he pleaſes, and continues it as he pleaſes. You will no where ſee the characters of the ſeveral Emperors ſo boldly or ſo juſtly drawn. Perhaps they are in ſome reſpects too cloſe, the greateſt and the moſt unnatural crimes are mentioned in theſe recitals, and perhaps they are mentioned too minutely. I cannot but with *Suetonius* had expreſſed more deteſtation, or had been leſs particular, on theſe occaſions; but nature, in the ingenuous mind, will ſupply that cenſure in which he is defective.

You will admire the language of *Suetonius*: you will no where meet with more elegant *Latin*: his expreſſion is natural and eaſy; very ſhort yet always clear. He is happy at deſcription, and his narration has all the grace of plainneſs and all the beauty of propriety. His words are all pure and happily ſelected, and his arrangement of them ſweet without being affectedly muſical. I know no man whom nature had more qualified for an Hiſtorian; certainly no man ever took more pains to improve his talents. If he is free in his deſcription of the vices of the Emperors, he is as warm in the praiſe of their virtues: he is full of precepts of morality; and ſeems, in his general conduct, to have ſteered between virtue and vice as carefully as he did between partiality and malice. He ſeems to have conſidered the Hiſtorian as a character that ought to be ſacred from all attachments, and he is rather to be ſtiled an ingenuous than a looſe writer, even in his moſt exceptionable paſſages. Truth was his aim, he wiſhed truth wore a better face, but he deſcribed her as ſhe was.

JUSTIN,

JUSTIN, my dear Lord, hardly deſerves the name of an original Hiſtorian, though if he would have kept his own council, we ſhould perhaps have been ignorant of this piece of ſecret hiſtory. He abridged the Work of a famous Writer of his time, *Trogus Pompeius*. It is this abridgment which we honour with the name of *Juſtin*'s Works, and it is happy for us that it has ſurvived the wreck of learning, for the original is loſt.

THE antient Writers have had the ſecret of ſaying a vaſt deal in a very little compaſs: one would hardly imagine that this little Work contains the ſtory of two thouſand years. The original Author began with *Ninus*, and you will find the Hiſtory ending in the days of *Auguſtus*. The ſcope was equal to the time comprehended in the plan: It was not the Hiſtory of the *Romans* alone that *Trogus* wrote, nor is it that only which *Juſtin* has abridged. *Ninus*, with whom the account begins, was the founder of the *Aſſyrian* Empire, and many occurrences of the earlier world are related at a fair length, in proportion to the plan of the Work. What is the more ſtrange, *Juſtin*, whoſe compaſs was ſo circumſcribed, has not contented himſelf with bare relation; he is, in many places large upon what might be eſteemed by another Writer little incidents, and he has, though not many, yet ſome digreſſions: and they are of length; and though cenſured by the ſeverer Critics, your Lordſhip's candour will allow them beauty.

You will find in *Juſtin*, my Lord, all the purity and elegance of the beſt *Roman* Writers, and a portion of ſpirit equal to his elegance. I wiſh I could ſay as much in favour of his fidelity and of his accuracy. He has occaſion to mention the *Jews*, and he does it with a very unworthy partiality. He is ſevere without juſtice, and has falſities that ſet him very low with thoſe who know the true hiſtory of that antient people. I have obſerved of more than one of the Writers I have lately named, that your Lordſhip is not to place an abſolute confidence in them in matter of chronology. *Juſtin* is contemptibly faulty in this article: whether he be chargeable with theſe errors as immediately his own, or whether they were in his original, has been a matter of diſpute. but the original writer ſtands ſo fair in the opinion of thoſe antients who had ſeen his Works, and there runs ſuch an air of careleſſneſs through a great deal of *Juſtin*, that I am afraid we muſt place the miſtakes to his account.

I CLOSED the account of the *Greek* Hiſtorians, my Lord, with the name of an Author not exactly of their rank; give me leave to take the ſame liberty with the *Roman*, and to conclude my liſt of thoſe of the Hiſtorians in that language which I would adviſe you to read, with the name of the younger *Pliny*. The Works of the elder of this name are a prodigious treaſure of knowledge, but I cannot recommend them to your peruſal. There is too much: the matter is a great deal of it uſeleſs, and he abounds with faults and errors which you cannot have opportunities of diſcovering, and many of them ſuch

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as his commentators have been little qualified to detect. The Natural Hiſtorian *Pliny* has collected from all the Authors, good and bad who had written before him, all that they had ſaid upon this ſubject; and, in conſequence, his Work is a collection of truth and error, which you will not be able to ſeparate. He will be uſeful to turn to on occaſion, but even in moſt caſes it will be better to have recourſe to *Dioſcorides* and *Theophraſtus*, for a great part of his knowledge is theirs, and in many places he has tranſlated them too careleſly. I have mentioned the elder *Pliny* but occaſionally, my Lord, to warn you of the miſchief he might poſſibly have done you on an unnoticed ſearch, rather than on account of any good it is poſſible for you to acquire from him; he has a great character among the learned, but it is otherwiſe among the knowing. Thoſe who are unacquainted with the ſubjects on which he treats reverence him, but thoſe who have ſtudied them think very lightly of him. There is a great deal of artifice in the quoting him on certain occaſions. He has ſaid ſo much that it is poſſible to favour any opinion from ſomething or other in him; and almoſt any thing may be proved by his teſtimony.

I AM to ſpeak in a very different language of the younger *Pliny*. He is as much an original as his uncle was a collector. Every thing that he delivers is his own, and carries a mark of that ſound judgment and diſcerning candour, that one ſhould know it to be his, though it were met with out of its place. No man has excelled him in purity of phraſe: none has equalled him in what thoſe who are accuſtomed to the writings

of theſe Authors call happineſs of expreſſion. He ſeems to have had a greater command of words than all men, and never to have uſed any but the moſt expreſſive and the moſt elegant; his ſtyle is nervous and yet fluent. No Author ſeems to have had ſo great a command of himſelf as *Pliny*. When he pleaſes he is florid, when he pleaſes dry. In one part you ſee all the beauties of a diffuſed ſtyle, in the next all the force of a contracted. He has written on a vaſt variety of ſubjects, and ſo happily has he ſuited his ſentiments as well as his language to each, that you will not be able to ſay which was his proper ſphere: he is at times the ſtateſman, and at times the common acquaintance, the familiar intimate. Points of philoſophy are in one letter his ſubject, in another ſome piece of intricate criticiſm. In one the moſt important occurrences, in another the moſt trivial concerns; and yet amidſt this vaſt ſcene, you will not be able to ſay which part of it he was moſt qualified to manage, or of which he has ſpoke with moſt propriety. He has ſublimity where it is proper, and, where the ſubject will bear it, wit. In the one he never borders upon bombaſt, and in the other he is never forced or conſtrained, but his wit is at once maſculine and eaſy. You will ſee in him, as in all the reſt of the Claſſics, the man of conſequence and character in every part. You will admire the Writer, you will reſpect the Man, and while you applaud the ſentiments you will reverence the Character.

I am, my Lord, &c.

LET-

LETTER IV.

Of the *Greek* and *Latin* Poets.

I HAVE placed the Poetical Writers among the Claſſics, laſt in the account, not, my dear Lord, becauſe they are leaſt in eminence, but becauſe they are of leſs immediate uſe in the great purpoſe with which I have put down theſe *Obſervations*. Beſide, I have all along mentioned theſe Writers in the order in which I would have you read them: and be aſſured, my Lord, that he who ſtudies the Claſſics with intent to form his own ſtyle and manner on their plan, ought to have conſidered it thoroughly before he meddles with theſe dangerous people. Solidity is firſt to be attained: a true, a ſedate, and an accurate judgment. The Poets have been poſſeſſed of this, but they are the laſt in whom it ſhould be ſtudied. Their form of writing gave them ſo many opportunities of giving ſcope to their fancy, that it is not to be ſuppoſed he who attacks them without ſettled notions of what is proper, as well as what is great, will ever be able to diſcern how far he may go in the ſame road; and where is the nice point at which they know to ſtop: or what that is which may be allowed in poetry and cannot in proſe, and what is common to the one and to the other.

YOU will have gone through enough of preparation, my dear Lord, before your ſecond reading of theſe immortalized geniuſes, to know how far the ſoberer writers of their own time

were like them; and by this you will accurately know how far you may be like them; where to ſtop the courſe, and where to give the reins. I would no more have a courſe of this ſtudy, although it regarded only ſpeaking in public, be concluded without, than I would have it begun with them. As much power as they have to miſlead and perplex him who attempts their excellences before he has informed himſelf how far it will be merit, and where it will be error to follow them; ſo much, and more than ſo much, power they have to enliven, aggrandize, and ſupport the ſentiment as well as language of him who admires them, with this knowledge.

WHEN one is to write of the antient Poets, there can be no diſpute about where we are to begin. The name of *Homer* has been, and always will be, placed in the front by all that have any conception of what is great, what is proper, or what is elegant. Others have done well at times, or have done well in part, but *Homer*, in his great work the *Iliad*, has done ſo throughout, and in every part. There we ſee the ſame ſublimity of thought, the ſame boldneſs of expreſſion, the ſame amazing greatneſs and propriety marching through the whole compaſs with the ſame equal pace, without one fall or ſtop. Thoſe who talk of the nodding of this Poet do not level their cenſure at the *Iliad*, and it is by that, my Lord, I would have you to judge of this Poet. That is the Poem which he wrote in the full vigour of his mind. *Milton*, in his latter part of life wrote a *Paradiſe Regain'd*, and *Homer* an *Odyſſey*. The *Odyſſey*, my dear Lord, is not leſs inferior to the *Iliad*, than the latter

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to the former Poem of *Milton*; but as there are many fine things in the *Paradise Regain'd* of the *English* Poet, ſo are there in the latter Work of the *Grecian*: ſo many, indeed, that the Poem is ſecond hardly to any in the world, excepting the other of the ſame Author. What a praiſe to the venerable Bard! his leaſt valuable piece, that which we ſee was written in the decline of his life, is greater than almoſt all the other Poems in the world! The *Odyſſey* contains paſſages any one of which is of more worth than the whole labours of many that have been eſteemed great Writers. His ſtory of the Cyclops has in it all the fire of the *Iliad*, all the dignity of its fineſt parts of the ſame kind, and his deſcriptions of the tempeſts in which his heroe ſuffers are all himſelf, and full of his amazing powers. Theſe, however, are only paſſages ſelected from the reſt; the Poem, upon the whole is, in compariſon of the *Iliad*, inſipid, cold, and lifeleſs. None ever thought the *Iliad* too long, all have thought the *Odyſſey* ſo. It is as full of narration, as the *Iliad* is of *action*. It is evidently the work of an enfeebled Poet, and ſhews the marks of age and weakneſs throughout. It is true, indeed, that it is only in compariſon of the other work of the ſame divine Author that we can call it ſo, and that although old age, it is, as *Longinus* ſays, the old age of *Homer*: the ſetting ſun, which though it has no longer that invigorating heat and fire, yet has the ſame magnificence.

THERE are, beſide the *Iliad* and *Odyſſey*, the mock heroic Poem, *The battle of the Frogs and Mice*, and ſome Hymns aſcribed to *Homer*. Theſe have been diſputed by ſome, and allowed

by others, as Works of the ſame Author. I am of opinion that the greater part of them, if not the whole, are his, but they are not worthy to be read in compariſon of the *Iliad*. We have ſome very poor Poems of *Milton's*, principally ſchool exerciſes, preſerved in one of the volumes of his Works, and there is here and there a thought in them that pleaſes; but for the reſt they are unworthy the name they bear: it is doubtleſs thus in regard to thoſe Hymns aſcribed to *Homer*: ſuch of them as are his, were written when young, and before he had finiſhed his ſtudies; it is by the *Iliad* only that he is to be judged, and that is ſuch a Poem that all others appear poor in the compariſon. Never was equal ſpirit kept up in any Work; the whole is buſy, full of action, and full of ſentiment: it contains the actions and the ſentiments of heroes whom the Poet has exalted to the rank of Gods, or ſomething more, for he occaſionally mentions the Gods of his country among them, and often they cannot be ſaid to make an equal figure.

YOU are well informed, I am aſſured, by this time, my dear Lord, that there muſt be ſublimity of thought as well as of expreſſion to command the true applauſe of thoſe who can judge as they ought: no man ever equalled *Homer* in the ſublimity of expreſſion, but no man ever came near to him in the amazing ſublimity of his thoughts: his conceptions are magnificent beyond all that the power of the human mind ever before arrived at. His deſcription of the Goddeſs of Diſcord places her feet upon the earth, and extends the mighty figure till the

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head is loſt among the clouds: his meaſure of the leap of the horſes of his Deity, is not by miles or leagues, but by the extent of the horizon. *Longinus*, who has alſo quoted theſe paſſages, improves, ſo his commentators expreſs it, upon the Poet, and ſays, it is the extent of the univerſe, and cries out, if they were to take another leap there would not be room for it in ſpace. The commentators on *Longinus* do him great honour for this exaggeration, and call him greater than *Homer*. He is greater, but he is falſely ſo. The Poet knew where to ſtop the career of his fancy, ſo did not his commentator. The one is truly ſublime, the other bombaſt and abſurd. Every leap, ſays *Homer*, took in as much of ſpace as a man can comprehend with his eye when placed upon a hill and looking over the ocean. He has given all the advantages to the extent of the horizon, and with all theſe the leap of the horſes is about eighteen miles: this is magnificent enough; and it leaves room for more: but the other carries abſurdity in the very expreſſion.

THE ſpirit of *Homer* appears to a vaſt advantage under the circumſtances of this ſtory: no man was able to have executed ſuch a plan as he ought, no plan but this would have been able to ſhew *Homer* in his full glory. We are amazed at thoſe exalted ſentiments which he puts into the mouths of his heroes, and cannot but allow him all the praiſes of a heroe while he but paints another. The ſpeech of *Sarpedon* to his friend is truly of this kind. Why are we diſtinguiſhed from others with ſuperior honours, but that thoſe who have beſtowed them ſuppoſe us ſuperior in

virtue and in courage? Let us not act unworthily of our character, let us vindicate the Gods who caused us to be born to these honours, and shew to those who envy us deeds which they dare not imitate. When a cloud has surrounded the *Grecian* army, and all are in confusion and dismay, what is the prayer of *Ajax*? Not that *Jupiter* will spare them from the destruction which seems to threaten them; that were not the thought of a heroe: he prays for daylight, that may give him opportunities of signalizing his courage: he is outrageous that he is denied to fight, and calls for the opportunities of facing his enemy, though that enemy should be *Jupiter* himself.

You will admire him in this, and think it as high as human genius could arrive, to paint human nature worthily, in her highest excellence and greatness: but *Homer* had more to do: he had a nobler task, and he has executed it more nobly. He had in these places his heroes to describe, but in others he had Gods, and he has acquitted himself as well. If we admire him in the one, he astonishes us in the other; we almost tremble with an enthusiastic transport while we read them. He introduces *Neptune* walking over the level earth, and his step not interrupted by the seas or mountains: they do not discompose the Deity, but themselves tremble wheresoever he appears. In all other Works you will find the Gods described by Authors who have no idea of greatness but from those qualities that are reverenced in men: but in *Homer* you see them figured as of another nature, great beyond all that can appear of greatness in their creatures,

creatures, and the whole deſcription has an air of majeſty and grandeur above the reſemblance, and painted without the alloy of terreſtrial things. You will pity the Poet whoſe ideas were ſo noble and ſo worthy the greateſt ſubjects, that he had not on theſe occaſions a greater. He who could give ſuch majeſty to fabled Deities, the children of mens imagination, and whom their very prieſts had loaded with human frailties, how would he have expreſſed himſelf, had he had the God of heaven and earth for his praiſe: and had the cuſtom, had the religion of his times, afforded him ideas worthy of ſuch a power.

No mortal man has ever been poſſeſſed of ſo much genius, accompliſhed in ſuch a manner by nature, or ſo perfected by ſtudy for all that is great in Poetry, as *Homer*. No man ever poſſeſſed ſo noble a fancy, none ever had acquired ſo great a knowledge. Mankind were his ſtudy, and none ever made an equal proficiency in it. Variety never appeared in ſo diſtinguiſhed a light as in the *Iliad*, nor did any Poem ever naturally threaten a greater fameneſs. At leaſt one half of it is taken up in the relation of battles between the ſame two armies, under the conduct of the ſame Generals, and on the ſame occaſion. Where would one ſuppoſe a fund of variety could be found for ſuch an enumeration? None but *Homer*, perhaps, would have known where to find it, but in him you ſee it in all the pride of circumſtance. In the firſt engagement which he deſcribes, you will imagine he has exhauſted all the ſtores of his imagination; you will ſuppoſe he has introduced into this all that is great and all that can be terrible:

you will retain that opinion, my Lord, till you come to the next; but as you go on you will find every where new food for admiration, you will find, from the firſt battle to the laſt, every one riſing above the other in all the circumſtances of importance, of variety in events, and of terror in the deſcription.

YOU will be aſtoniſhed, my Lord, in reading *Homer*, to find him equal to himſelf in every part, and as well qualified for one as for another ſpecies of writing. You will be amazed to riſe at once with the ſubject from the eaſieſt familiarity to the ſublimeſt dignity of ſentiment and of expreſſion, and you will not be leſs ſurpriſed when the attention has been on the rack for a long time with the greateſt and moſt terrible deſcriptions, to find yourſelf relieved by ſome leſs important incident; and to ſee him treat the one with the ſame propriety as the other. This is an art which *Homer* had, in a manner, to himſelf, at leaſt he is ſo excellent in it, that he eclipſes all other pretenſions. He knows exactly how long the attention can be kept upon the ſtretch, and he holds it there no longer. He has the power of raiſing it thither beyond all men, and he not only knows how, but he alſo knows when, to relieve it. In his more important relations he is, of all men, the moſt a maſter of the ſublime, and has the happieſt and the boldeſt uſe of figures; in the more familiar no man has ever equalled him in that beautiful ſimplicity which is their true ornament.

OTHER Poets have had their ſeveral excellencie., but *Homer* has them all. In his *Iliad*, my Lord,

Lord, you will find all that can be great, all that can be pleaſing in Poetry. He is equally eaſy in every kind of ſtyle, and happy in the uſe of every dialect: but with all the excellencies of the other Poets, he has thoſe of his own, which obſcure them all: the unbounded reach of his invention, the extent and ſcope of his knowledge, the vigour of his thought, and the correctneſs of his judgment, are all peculiar; none has, nor will any equal him or come near him. What in others are ſingle, and, as ſingle, are great, in him are combined, and add luſtre to one another. And the grace of language, which he has thrown over all, communicates a beauty as well as ſtrength to them which they were only worthy to command, and which has never attended any other. *Homer*'s epithets are the moſt noble that can be conceived: the moſt of them appear ſo to us at this vaſt diſtance of time; the reſt were ſo when he wrote, but with their cuſtoms men change their opinions. Even his expletives are thrown in more out of ornament than of neceſſity, and, with the one and the other, he has added a harmony that meaſure never knew in any other Writer. It is ſingular that in the enumeration of his legions he was obliged to introduce the rougheſt and moſt inharmonious words; but though they were ſo in nature, they were not ſo under the direction of this Poet. He has found the art of rendering even the harſheſt of them muſical, and that in ſo ſtrange a manner that they ſeem to change their nature as they ſtand in his verſes. When I mention the harmony and muſical cadences of *Homer*'s Verſes, do not underſtand, my dear Lord, that I mean they are all ſoft, and gentle,

and flowing, and all alike: *Homer* had too nice an ear to tire with the repetition of the same sounds. He has dared to call in the harshest words, and has added to the graces of his language by it. As the Composer will sometimes introduce discord to give a new grace to his piece, in the same manner has *Homer* called in the roughest and most unpleasant sounds among the smoothest that ever flowed over the human tongue; and from the combination of both it is that he has raised that structure of noble harmony which never cloys nor ever tires.

It must be acknowledged that *Homer* had a vast advantage, in the language in which he wrote, over those who have written in any other: the variety of dialects in the *Greek* give a peculiar force and sweetness appropriated to the passion. No other language has them, nor in this has any other Poet used them with any thing like the boldness or the happiness of *Homer*. You will not wonder that he was peculiarly fond of the *Ionic*, as a Poet he must be so: none is so sweet, none so smooth, nor is there any that has a grace equal to the openness of this from its avoiding all contractions. This you will find his principal and his general favourite; when he would be soft or when he would be sonorous, when he would be sweet or fluent, this is the dialect; but, as occasion required, he has called in the plainness of the *Dorick*, or the smoothness of the *Æolick*, and upon the whole has formed that variety of sounds which he always appropriates to the sense, and which alone could have worthily conveyed that infinite variety of matter and of sentiment which appear in all parts

of

of his Poem. You will admire the ſound of his compound epithets, but their ſound is not all you will admire in them, they have expreſſion that could not have been conveyed by any ſingle word, and while they elevate the language they explain and enforce the ſentiment. His figures will appear bold to you beyond all that have appeared, but you will always find them ſupported by the occaſion; and though you allow him lofty beyond all Writers in a very great degree, you will never accuſe him of being lofty in the wrong place, or of being too lofty in his expreſſion for his ſentiment.

HESIOD is pretended by many to have been an earlier Writer than *Homer*, the ſtory of thoſe ages is dark and confuſed, perhaps it is moſt probable that they were cotemporaries: nor are we to ſuppoſe theſe the firſt poets who ever wrote, becauſe their writings are the oldeſt that have travelled down to us. I ſhall not pretend to eſtabliſh any parallel between their writings, whatever there may be in their antiquity: but while I place *Heſiod* at an infinite diſtance below *Homer*, you muſt not ſuppoſe that I mean to repreſent him to you as an indifferent Writer; between *Homer* and the beſt Poet who ever wrote there is an infinite diſtance: and *Heſiod*, although not the next in fame, is yet a very great one.

I DOUBT not, my Lord, but you have heard *Heſiod* repreſented as a very mean Writer: it has been the cuſtom, among a certain ſet of critics, to allow him no better a character: but you will, I am ſure, join with me in oppoſing the opinion of *Virgil* to them all. *Virgil*, whoſe own

own compoſitions ſhew how much he was able to judge, ſpeaks of him in different places, and always with honour and with a peculiar reverence: he propoſed him as his model in a great part of the *Georgick*, and in his higheſt praiſe on this part of his Works, ſeems to have aimed at nothing greater than imitating, in his own language what he had admired in *Heſiod* in the *Greek*.

THERE are only two Poems which are undoubtedly *Heſiod*'s, at this time known to the world: the *Theogony*, or generation of the Gods, and the *Works and Days*. He wrote others, but they are loſt, and pedants of ſome ages ago have wrote for him. You will not be ready to believe the ſhield of *Hercules*, a cold and poor imitation of that glorious deſcription of *Achilles*'s ſhield in *Homer*, to be the work of an Author of *Heſiod*'s rank in genius. You will before have obtained a general knowledge of the fabled ſtories of the Gods of theſe times; but you will not read this poem with the leſs pleaſure for any thing you have ſeen before; you will ſee in him a ſhare of fancy and invention which nothing could prevent you from reverencing in the higheſt manner, but the having read the ſuperior excellencies of *Homer* in the ſame way. But if he is infinitely ſhort of that Poet, even where he is excellent, in this reſpect, there is yet a great deal that is purely his own, and that you will allow in him equal to all the Writers of the world. His verſe is ſweet and flowing beyond that of all who have written. He has nothing of that elegant variety, that manly harmony, you ſee in *Homer*, but he has more eaſe and ſoftneſs; and if he falls below the other in his figures, there

there is an elegance in the plainness of his style that makes great compensation. His manner is extremely charming, his arrangement of things judicious and agreeable, and he has an air of familiarity and, at the same time, of agreeable variation in his relations, that make him a favourite with all men. Of all the *Greek* Poets none is so clear, so perspicuous in all his parts, as *Hesiod*; he is the most familiar of all to be read, and he is, in some degree, necessary to the understanding of all the others. All that they say of the Deities of their worship are from this source. And, my dear Lord, if you will consider the Author, as you read him with this view, you will find that the origin of a great part of his fables is some absurd and extravagant misrepresentation of the Scripture History. That both *Homer* and *Hesiod* might have read the books of the Old Testament, chronology, and the story of those times, very well allows; and from their writings it appears extremely probable that they did so: they have owed many of their greatest beauties to the Scripture, but how have they misrepresented what they have borrowed from it!

You will find in *Hesiod* the same sort of principles, the same foundation upon which *Homer* has built his immortal Work, but the genius was different. *Hesiod* has taken as much pains, and he has taken them in the same way, but with different effect. You will find in *Hesiod* all that knowledge of nature that you see in *Homer*, but you will find it differently improved and differently applied. You will find great knowledge in his Poem of the *Works and Days*, and that much of it such as is as much in fashion at this time

time as when he wrote: and in regard to husbandry, in particular, you will find that *Virgil* had occasion for all his acknowledgments, and that his obligations to this Author are not at all less than he represents them. You will see in *Hesiod* many things delivered with great plainness, which make an elegant figure in *Virgil*, and you will find in this, as in the comparison with *Homer*, in those parts in which he has treated upon subjects that Author has also mentioned, that the same knowledge, under the direction of a greater or of a lesser genius, makes a very different appearance, and is seen under a strangely various light.

If all the Poems of *Sappho* had been preserved, I doubt whether I should have advised your Lordship, at your time of life, to have read them: but those which remain, though tender enough, and warm enough to give a very fair idea of the rest, may be admired without danger. *Sappho*, the greatest genius for verse that ever the female world produced, had all the advantages which a woman could enjoy to make her rise to the greatest height in it. *Alcæus* was her lover: he gave her all those precepts which had rendered his own verse immortal; and it is not impossible but he may have joined with her in the finishing, in the correcting, and the ornamenting of her own. Poets acquire a mutual advantage by their conversing with one another; and when I suppose that *Sappho* might receive assistances from *Alcæus*'s judgment, I doubt not but *Alcæus* was repaid the advantage from *Sappho*'s genius and spirit.

THE Hymn to Venus, and the Ode to a young female whom ſhe admired, for there is ſomething very ſtrange and unnatural in the ſtory of her amours, are all that are extant of hers, beſide a few fragments of little conſequence, and theſe have been preſerved by accident in other Authors No part of the vaſt quantity ſhe is ſaid to have written has come down to us on its own foundation: we are not to ſuppoſe that the want of merit in her pieces was the occaſion of this. It is ſaid they were too warm, perhaps they were too infamous to be preſerved: be it as it will we have loſt them. The two which remain, you will read, my Lord, with a peculiar pleaſure, and moſt the laſt; in this you have at one view all the circumſtances of love and jealouſy that can affect an human frame. Every thing that can ſpeak love, every thing that can confeſs impatience and uneaſineſs, are collected and thrown together in the compaſs of a few lines, and perhaps there is not more art in the bringing them together than in the diſpoſing and arranging them. It is an obſervation of *Longinus*, that the proper choice of circumſtances, and the artful arrangement of them when choſen, is a great article in obtaining that ſublime which he prefers to all the other graces of writing; and he produces this Ode as an inſtance of the happy manner in which it may be done by a judicious Writer. It is to this circumſtance that we owe the knowledge of the Ode, for *Longinus* has preſerved it intire in this quotation, and he obſerves upon it, that the reader muſt be in admiration to ſee every thing accumulated in it that could be of importance in the

the event, to ſee the eye, the ear, the tongue, the colour, the vital fluid, the whole body, in ſhort, and the whole ſoul, actuated by the paſſion, and the frame ready to burſt to pieces under its influence.

THE verſe in which *Sappho* wrote was of her own invention, and has been ſince called by her name the *Sapphic*. She had more of nature in her Poems than all who have written on the ſubject of love; and as ſhe never wrote but when under the immediate influence of the paſſion, ſhe has always added to the harmony of her numbers a fire and living warmth that no other Writer of any ſex has ever arrived at. We have examples among the *Engliſh*, that women, when they write, do it with more nature, and often with more ſpirit than men, but they want diſcretion and reſerve; on the contrary, there does not ſeem to have been, among all the Poets of antiquity, a more correct judgment than that of this glowing Writer.

IT has been a very bold attempt to tranſlate this inimitable Ode, and when you have read the original, my Lord, you will alſo ſay a very fruitleſs one. I would not be underſtood by this to mean, that the Poem publiſhed in the *Spectator* is not a good one: it moſt aſſuredly is ſo, and it has ſo much of the merit of the original, that it has the ſame thoughts well expreſſed, and in the ſame order; but a great ſhare of beauty is communicated to the original by the muſical ſound of the words. Nobody ſelected them ſo happily, nobody ever had the art of arranging them ſo gracefully as *Sappho*. Thoſe who have admired

admired her moſt, and moſt judiciouſly, have given a great ſhare of the praiſe to this circumſtance, and a much greater Poet than the *Engliſh* tranſlator, *Catullus*, who attempted to imitate them in *Latin*, has confeſſed that it was impoſſible to ſucceed.

ALCÆUS, the lover of *Sappho*, was her countryman, and her intimate acquaintance many years. He did not only reſemble her in genius, but in his violent and abandoned love. He had all the unnatural vices of his miſtreſs, and as ſhe, after ſhe had been happy in a huſband, and even born him children, fell into the ſhameful and infamous fondneſs for her own ſex, *Alcæus*, while he was pining and dying for her, indulged the deteſtable paſſion for his. There is no vice that ſtamps ſo indelible a character of infamy upon the Claſſic Ages, as their avowed love for boys; and in this none has been ſo open, ſo avowed, as *Alcæus*. The little we have to this time preſerved of his writings will eſtabliſh him a very high character with your Lordſhip in the Lyric. There is a great reſemblance of the manner of *Sappho*, as well in ſentiment as in expreſſion. The fragments which *Urſinus* has preſerved have an elegance as well as fire in them that are no where elſe to be found, unleſs in the writings of his miſtreſs. He would have been, perhaps, as dangerous to youth as *Sappho*, and we may congratulate with the world, that either accident, or the virtue and wiſdom of ſome in power, has deſtroyed the greateſt part of his writings. Nothing is ſo fatal to the minds of young people as pieces in which vice bears a pleaſing aſpect, and theſe are the more fatal as they

they have the more merit. It is in the language and manner of the Claſſics too, that this is moſt fatal. We ſee in our own Lord *Rochester* pictures that ſhock inſtead of inticing; but in theſe more artful advocates, the ſubject was treated with ſome degree of reſerve; juſt ſo much was expoſed as would pleaſe in the aſpect, and the reſt, which would have given diſtaſte, thrown behind in ſuch a manner that it left the reader a deſire of enquiring into it.

IN what we have of *Alcæus* the moſt abandoned libertine appears in a pleaſing and an amiable light. I have often thought our *Shakeſpear* blameable in drawing the characters of lying, cowardice, and villainy, in his *Falſtaff*, in ſo whimſical a manner, that we are in ſome degree pleaſed with them; but the cenſure holds infinitely ſtronger againſt *Alcæus*. He makes a boundleſs libertiniſm his praiſe, and in one of his Poems, by a very expreſſive, though a very coarſe ſimile, compares himſelf to the hog, that while he devours one acorn with his mouth, eats another with his eyes; ſo he ſaid it was with him, that while he was happy with one beauty he was forming his deſigns upon another. I have mentioned his worſt paſſion to you, my Lord, and am ſorry the vice had ſo little ſhocking in it to the *Roman* ear, that even the name and figure of his favourite in this paſſion are preſerved to us by other Writers. *Horace* commemorates his black eyes and beautiful hair, and *Tully* talks of a mole upon his finger which the Poet thought a beauty.

YOU

YOU will guess, my Lord, by the honourable mention that is made of *Alcæus* among the other Classics, that his Works were of some consequence. If they were such as we are told, it is well that we have no surer proof of it. The vices seldom grow in any breast alone: to these abandoned and unnatural crimes, *Alcæus* was a drunkard and a coward. He had nothing but war and bloodshed in his mouth, but we have the testimony of the faithful *Herodotus* that he ran away in the battle which the *Lesbians* lost to the *Athenians*, and, like his good friend *Horace*, threw his arms away that they might not be troublesome.

IF I rejoice in the loss of *Alcæus*'s amorous compositions, there were others, which by the testimonies of those who were acquainted with them, we ought to lament. That he wrote of war, as well as love, is indisputable, and those who placed him in some degree below *Sappho* in the fire of the one, gave him the highest praises on the subject of the other. It is not a wonder that *Alcæus* wrote of war and warlike subjects. Though we have accounts of his leaving the field not much to his honour, we have also assurance of his being placed at the head of his country's forces, and it is particularly recorded of him, that he used to speak to his soldiers in verse. Let not this appear odd to you, my Lord. According to our notions of verse, as rhyme becomes a part of it, there would be something extraordinary enough in a speech made in it; but the *Greeks* had only measure, and it was not difficult for a person accustomed to write in measure to pronounce

pronounce it. There would be alſo the more of nature in this, as every man who is in great earneſt, or is agitated by ſome paſſion, naturally delivers himſelf in a kind of meaſure. If we are to believe the antients, the greater part of *Alcæus*'s Poems was of the martial kind, and thoſe who were acquainted with them give him the praiſe of a lofty and noble manner, a great dignity and ſtrength of expreſſion, and even compare his manner to that of *Homer*. What pity, my Lord, that ſuch a genius ſhould be capable of ſuch miſapplication! that he in whoſe power it was to have been uſeful to mankind, inſtructive in his morals, and ennobling in his ſentiments, ſhould have proſtituted his genius, in the greater part, to the ſervice of vice and infamy. The reproach, on theſe occaſions, is always proportioned to the endowments. The eyes of all the world are upon men of great abilities. I know I need not mention this to your Lordſhip as a caution againſt vice, or againſt that ſcandal of all great qualities, the being an advocate for it; but ſtill remember, my Lord, there are more reaſons than your birth for the eyes of mankind being bent upon you: no part of your life will paſs without a comment; and I know they will be to your honour.

I AM ſorry to confeſs that *Anacreon* was devoted, as *Alcæus*, to the moſt hateful and the moſt unnatural of crimes: but what is it cuſtom will not authoriſe! there was at that time no ſhame attending it. One would wiſh to draw a veil over ſo diſadvantageous a part of the characters of the Poets of theſe reverenced periods, but their Works have rendered it impoſſible; they

ſpeak

ſpeak without a bluſh of what they at that time could act alſo without a bluſh, and there could be no way of wiping off the ſtain but the cancelling the greateſt part of their compoſitions. *Anacreon*, like *Alcæus*, was a profeſſed debauchee in all ſenſes of the word; if he was as lewd he was as drunken, and he had as much falſe pride in the one as in the other. We owe to his devotion to the jolly Deity the fineſt Odes that have been written. If ever man was born a Poet and lived a Poet it was *Anacreon*. He was early in life toſſed from place to place, by ſtrange and by cruel viciſſitudes of fortune, but we never ſee him out of ſpirits about it: he drank, and he loved, and he wrote, be he where he might, and his circumſtances what they might; and ſuch an utter contempt had he for riches, that he not only took no pains to acquire any, but when a Monarch who loved him had given them to him, he ſent them back, and told him they were not worth the trouble of keeping.

ANACREON muſt have written a vaſt number of Poems, he was continually compoſing, and he began young and lived to a great age. We find him commemorating the ravages of time upon his perſon in a moſt happy and pleaſing manner. What we have preſerved to this time can be but a very ſmall part of his Works, and we have reaſon from thoſe to lament, in no common manner, the loſs of the reſt. His drinking Odes have a ſpirit and fancy in them that have appeared in no other Poems on thoſe ſubjects, indeed they repreſent the vice in too agreeable a light. There is a ſimplicity in all that we have left of his that has been hit by none before him,

and that a thouſand have in vain endeavoured to imitate; the eaſe and unaffected graces that accompany every ſentiment, give an irreſiſtible claim for approbation, even to the leaſt and flighteſt. All ſeems to have been the effect of immediate thought, to have flowed without care and without labour from his mouth, and yet all is as finiſhed, as elegant, and as correct, as if the labour of life, of ſtudy. He has had all the happineſs of *Sappho* in the muſical ſound of his words, and the ſoft and eaſy manner in which they follow one another, but certainly without all the labour that it coſt that Authoreſs to ſelect and to arrange them. What appears the moſt eaſy, whether in Poetry or Proſe is, in general, the effect of the moſt conſummate labour, but certainly it is not ſo in this gay Writer. He never could have been at pains about any thing, and indeed the niceſt judgment will rather give it to his having had a nice and excellent ear, and a great command of his language, than to any of the ordinary arts of writing that he is ſo happy.

How different from that in which I have praiſed *Anacreon* ought to be the language which commemorate the lofty, the daring, and the happy *Pindar*. He has done a thouſand things which no Author but himſelf would have ventured but to think of, and he has ſucceeded in all. There are critics of the colder claſs, who have called him wild and incoherent; but it is not, my Lord, that *Pindar* wants connexion, but that they wanted diſcernment to ſee where it lies. The beauty of this ſpecies of Poetry is this ſeeming wildneſs. The farther the Author runs, the more diſtant his thoughts appear from his

his first subject, provided only that they have a real connexion with it, and that he can through them return at pleasure to it, naturally and fully, the better. The more he seems to want this relation in his several parts, provided he really have it, the better. None are able to judge perfectly of a Poem of this kind, but those who would have been able, had they applied to it, to have written such a one. Others will judge better in proportion to their talents, and while these applaud, as, my Lord, they always have applauded, and they always will applaud *Pindar*, the censure of the others is praise: the suffrages of both determine that he has kept a connexion, and that he has kept it under all the circumstances that are proper to this species of Poem.

THERE is this peculiar in *Pindar*, and it is owing to the plan of his Poem, the connexion of the several parts, and structure of the whole, that he must be admired all together, and not in any detached piece. Other Poets are happy in peculiar passages, and they are celebrated for them; but *Pindar* must be taken all together: his compositions are so many noble and lofty buildings in which, although every part is in itself beautiful, yet they can have no conception of the whole who do not view that whole together. We admire the disjointed remains of antient architecture which we see scattered over *Greece* and *Italy*; even the broken columns have their elegance and have their praise: but what is this proportioned to the applause that would have been paid to the architect, could the entire fabric now be seen? 'Tis thus with *Pindar*'s Odes, see them in pieces, and you will find taste, ele-

gance and grandeur in the minuteſt portion; but by how much the building has been the more auguſt, by ſo much the leſs will you be able to determine to what portion the ſingle column has belonged.

THERE is no part of *Pindar* that does not ſtrike and aſtoniſh the reader, though he knows not whither to refer it, nor is ſenſible of its greateſt grace, the propriety of its place, and the relation it has to the reſt, perhaps to ſome remote ſentence only of the Ode. He is muſical beyond all expreſſion to the judicious ear, but it is a harmony that every reader has not capacity to judge of. His numbers are appropriated, and his meaſure peculiar, but all its peculiarity is beauty. You will judge ſtrangely, my Lord, of *Pindar*, if you determine of his manner by what you ſee in our language under the name of Imitations of him; or if you allow all thoſe compoſitions to be *Pindaric* Odes which their Authors have called by that name. You would at that rate ſuppoſe *Pindar* no more than a wild, irregular verſifier; for all that theſe Gentlemen attempt is, to put together ſome looſe ſtanzas in a diſorderly manner, which, if they have neither meaſure nor connexion, they think muſt be like thoſe of that Writer, in whom they ſee neither the one nor the other. But you, my dear Lord, will judge of *Pindar* by himſelf, not by theſe: you will find in him a ſublimity of thought greater than that of all men except *Homer*, and bolder even than his: you will find a daring uſe of figures, which will aſtoniſh you, but your judgment will give credit to your imagination, and on the ſtricteſt enquiry you will find him as accurate as bold;

and

and in his meaſure you will ſee a rapidity and fire that have diſcloſed themſelves in no other Writer: theſe, my Lord, thoſe diſtinguiſh who read *Pindar* partially; you, who will conſider a whole Ode together, will perceive a new force and a new elegance in the ſentiments, as the ſeveral parts are ſeen cemented together, and a new harmony in the numbers as they have reference to one another. Of all Writers *Pindar* is he who has moſt happily and moſt boldly adapted his numbers to the ſubject, and made the ſound correſpond to the ſenſe. No man has treated of a more extenſive variety of matter. I do not mean that his ſubjects are thus various, my Lord, for of all mens they are the moſt confined; but this is an additional praiſe, when we conſider that endleſs variation of thoughts and occurrences which he has brought into them. In all theſe the ſound accompanies and illuſtrates the expreſſion; and although no man has ever dared to leap from ſubject to ſubject with that precipitation that he has done, he changes his ſounds as ſwiftly and as happily as his ſenſe, and the tranſition is not leſs judicious and rapid in one reſpect than in the other.

WHEN he leads you, my Lord, along the level and peaceful plane, no verſe ever flowed ſo ſmoothly or ſo equally; all is placid, calm and undiſturbed as the ſurface of ſome deep river, that ſteals along to the ſea through a flat country: there is not a wave, there is not a whirlpool, there is not a dimple: there appears nothing rough, nor any thing peculiarly ornamental, the pure ſimplicity is its own decoration, and ornament would have been diſturbance:

while you are gliding down the ſmooth ſtream with him, in a moment unexpectedly to you, but critically for the Writer, he wings you up the ſteep aſcent: all is force and ſtrength, but with that force there is a ſpirit that ſupports, that mellows, and that makes it eaſy. You triumph on the ſummit, you ſeem to tread on air as you read over the light lines; and in a moment more he rolls you down the ſharp deſcent with a rapidity that amazes you, that makes you giddy; but that never diſturbs him. His ſwifteſt meaſure is as correct as his moſt plain, and every part ſpeaks him great with the ſame propriety. Anon he winds you along ſome twiſted meander, as ſoft, as eaſy, and as variable in his numbers as in the path: he calls you hence to ſee ſome ſpectacle of pomp and dignity; while you admire he is rapt, while you are pleaſed he is inſpired. He thunders you along the chariot-race as ſwift as the heroes who diſpute the prize, and he animates you with all their ardour. His enthuſiaſm, while it aſtoniſhes, fills you with his own fire, and you do not ſeem to read but to write what is before you. Something like this *Longinus* ſays of what is the true ſublime. Its character, he tells us is, that it makes thoſe who read it think more greatly of themſelves than they were wont, and inſpires them with a noble tranſport, as if themſelves had written what they only read. If this be the character of the ſublime, then *Pindar* is the firſt of all examples of its force. I never read him otherwiſe than with all the fire and all the enthuſiaſm of theſe tranſports, and you will never read him otherwiſe, my Lord. While this is the caſe regard not what thoſe ſay of him who have not ſouls to be convinced. Your heart

heart will exemplify what the greateſt of all critics has wrote, and when you have done ſo, you may deſpiſe the unripened judgments of thoſe who cannot feel him. You will find him magnificent beyond all mortal men, and even in his loftieſt flights correct and proper: you will adore his dignity, you will reverence his noble enthuſiaſm; the amazing copiouſneſs of his fancy will ſtrike you with wonder, and give you greater notions of your own: his command of words will make you think more greatly of the *Greek* language than you had ever done before, and his eloquent arrangement of them will ſet your own *Demoſthenes* at an unlucky diſtance.

Theſe, my Lord, are not the immediate talent of a ſpeaker: they cannot ſerve as immediate patterns of eloquence in your own way: but, my dear Lord, attend to them, ſtudy them, reliſh them, and feel them: they will habituate you to a nobleneſs of expreſſion, as well as to a dignity of ſentiment; and you will know how far to regard and where to decline them. I never read *Pindar* without, in ſome degree, participating of that divine enthuſiaſm which has exalted him above all mortal men: and there is no way but this of reliſhing him truly: the cool and ſedate reader cannot travel with him, and therefore he loſes all the beauty of his connexions, and all the grace of his tranſitions. When you take him up, my Lord, you will feel the ſame temptation, but you will check the firſt emotions of it; it is a falſe fear, my Lord, that bids you do this: on the contrary, give way to the impulſe, throw down the reins on fancy's neck, and follow the glorious leader. He will, under this conduct, amaze and almoſt terrify, but he will never be-

wilder you. You will run with him: you will fly with him from ſtory to ſtory, from figure to figure, and when he has ſeemed to lead you away from the deſign of the Poem, in a moment he will return upon it with new fervour and new force. What appears irregularity to others will thus be ſeen by you the happieſt order in the world: you will adore the fancy that wanders ſo eternally, but never errs, and while your imagination goes along with his, you will anticipate thoſe paſſages which to others are wild, ſtrange, and unexpected. His expreſſion is like his numbers, and ſo it ſhould be: it is bold even to raſhneſs, but it is never extravagant: and while this fire of words attends the rapidity and energy of his meaſure, they not only adorn but they palliate and reconcile us to one another. I know, my Lord, your judgment will juſtify this exalted Writer againſt all the cavils or the cenſures of the critics; it is not their talent to write greatly, and of this you may be aſſured none will ever determine worthily of great Writers but thoſe who can do ſo. When they accuſe him of loſing his ſubject, you will carry your own thoughts with his, and keep it, as he does, conſtantly in your eye, though not the only object of it; and while they ſtare at his return, as they call it, to his matter, without apology or introduction, you who will have ſeen that he has never quitted it; will enjoy what they cenſure, and call that his greateſt excellence, which their good-nature is palliating under the name of a fault.

IN *Æſchylus*, my dear Lord, you will ſee the firſt attempts to make the Theatre a noble as well

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as a rational entertainment: and you will be aſtoniſhed to ſee him, who in a manner laid the firſt ſtone in the foundation with his own hands, carrying up the building almoſt to its full height. I don't know whether the limitation has a place; I don't know whether Tragedy, in regard to the propriety, expreſſion, and order, had ever a higher excellence than as it came from his hands: while it gained on one part in the ſucceeding ages it loſt on another, and at this time, we are more than as much below *Æſchylus* in ſome things, as we are above him in others; and what is an unlucky obſervation on our ſide, that thoſe things in which we excel, are of much leſs conſequence than thoſe in which we fail of his merits.

TERROR was underſtood at that time, and it ought to be underſtood now, as one of the great effects of Tragedy. *Æſchylus* raiſed it, and ſo do we: but let us examine how. He baniſhed, even in thoſe early days, all the bowls and daggers that had ſtained the cart of *Theſpis*, more worthy to be ſtained by them than a Theatre in this age; and when he was to execute this part of his office, how was it? *Medea* did not kill her children upon the ſtage, nor were butcheries of a more horrid kind committed before the audience. Thoſe who attended theſe antient ſcenes of greatneſs, and knew what they ought to feel, as well as thoſe who wrote knew how they ought to feel it, had ſharper ſenſations for what they underſtood was tranſacted, or was at that time tranſacting behind the ſcenes, than we can pretend to have of what is ſo bunglingly and unnaturally executed before our eyes. This, however,

was not the great forte of *Æschylus* for calling up horror. When the subject would bear the daring attempt, he produced his chorus not of citizens or virgins, but of furies. You start at the boldness and the novelty of the thought; think what they did then who saw it. Men scarce could comprehend, and women had not nerves to bear the surprize.

If you are given to admire that boldness, and almost extravagance that characterizes the greatest Authors, that is the only fault they are apt to run into, and that while faulty, has its share of beauty, you will find ample food for all your praise and all your applause in *Æschylus*; you will see in him all that unlimited greatness of imagination which you have admired in *Pindar*; you will read in him all those triumphs of expression which alone could be suited to the dignity of his subject and the grandeur of his own conceptions; but with all the fire you will not find all the judgment of *Pindar*.

Perhaps, my Lord, I am singular in this, but certain I am it is a singularity in the right, that I find all those faulty extravagancies in *Æschylus* which others, while they are blind to them in him, see where they are not in *Pindar*. Let others praise in the whole, and allow no fault in those whom they commend, I am writing not for ostentation but for use. On a serious examination you will find that many of those things which strike you most in *Æschylus* are not justifiable. Although he has in many places all the real dignity that can be expected from the greatest

greateſt Poet, yet in others, and theſe laſt I am afraid are ſuch paſſages as have been moſt admired in him, he is bombaſt and falſely glaring.

YOU will often admire his figures, and you will often admire them with reaſon, but dear my Lord, be upon your guard: you who read for imitation, take the preciſeſt care that you do not put down in your memory faults for beauties. *Æſchylus* has no faults but great and glorious ones; you will therefore be more in danger from them than from thoſe of all the other Writers in the world. You will find his figures, though they are great and glowing, yet often obſcuring his ſenſe inſtead of enlightening it, and you will no where better ſee, my Lord, how entirely great language depends upon the ſubject for its beauty. When it is not proper it ceaſes to be great, be the ſound what it will, the judicious ear will not allow it. It is the fault of *Æſchylus*, I think it is his greateſt, that his language is almoſt every where pompous; that very form of expreſſion which, when the ſubject bears it out, is all beauty as well as all dignity, loſes every grace, and from admirable becomes contemptible, as ſoon as the ſubject fails: you will ſee this plainly, my Lord, and you will know from the different effect how much it is often neceſſary to curb the genius, and how ungraceful ſounding language is on trivial occaſions.

IF we examine this Poet critically according to the rules of the Drama, we muſt condemn him often: but rules were written after *Æſchylus*. He has not ſtuck to a due regularity to character, and his manners are almoſt as little

varied as his expreſſion: dignity and ſpirit were the ſole objects of his ambition, and he has found the way to deſerve the higheſt praiſe for both; but in his attention to theſe greater excellencies he has overlooked a number that are though leſs important, yet neceſſary. *Longinus* has obſerved, that thoſe Writers who have had a genius capable of attaining to the true ſublime, have been apt to forget all other things in the purſuit of that. He ſays it is with the true ſublime as with great wealth, take what care men will, ſomething will be loſt from it. *Æſchylus* has loſt more from it than all others, for in his enthuſiaſtic ardour in the purſuit of it, he has forgot or neglected oftentimes thoſe things without which the ſublime itſelf wants greatly of its higheſt character and true perfection: but as the ſame Author adds, the beauties of this height of all eloquence, where they are unſullied, make amends for a thouſand faults. Other men have been ſublime in parts, or have attempted it in parts, but it is only this Poet who has aimed at it every where. He forgets the propriety of what he ſays in many places, but as it is always for the ſake of being great, the fault brings its excuſe always with it, and often a very ample atonement. He is never cool, there is ſpirit, there is much more than ſpirit, there is fire and tranſport in every paſſage; and the loftineſs and vehemence of his thought on all occaſions, to which on all occaſions he has alſo joined a proper loftineſs of expreſſion, will ſurprize you every where, even where it does not charm you. I have often thought that *Æſchylus* was unhappy in the choice of his manner of writing. The Drama was by no means the proper ſphere of him

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who wanted, but that is not the proper term, of him who disdained, variety; nor was it possible that the style in which he was always determined to write, could suit all mouths, or be in character with all persons. The Drama owes much to *Æschylus*, but *Æschylus* owes nothing to the Drama. Had he wrote in any other form he must have succeeded better: had he given his studies to the Ode, he would have rivalled *Pindar*.

THE fault of *Æschylus*, for he has but one fault, at least it is that one which has given origin to all the rest, is, that he often, in his eagerness and earnest pursuit of the sublime, falls into crude and undigested thoughts. All things become animated as he approaches them. The palace of *Lycurgus*, as *Bacchus* enters it, grows vocal, and the very walls roar out their resentment. This is extravagance, but it is noble extravagance. It is a fault and a great one, but then it is a glorious one too. Be not misled by this, my Lord, I repeat the warning, because in its beauty there is danger; be not misled by this, and there is nothing in *Æschylus* which you can too much admire: his imagination is extensive beyond that of almost any man, his conceptions are noble, his expression, when it is not extravagant, great and graceful. His images are lofty, and his figures bold, and in general happy. I doubt not but you have heard him mentioned as an obscure Author; be assured, my Lord, you will not find him so. The critics have confessed they found it difficult to understand him, but that will not dishearten you, you will remember, my Lord, my admonition

of entering not only into the meaning but into the ſpirit of an Author. Take his ſoul and genius, in ſome degree, along with you, and his thoughts become, as it were, your own; they riſe in a natural ſucceſſion, and inſtead of being perplexed, one runs always with him, and you, my Lord, I ſpeak from what I know of your genius, will be often before him. You will have read *Pindar* with ſpirit and with rapture, for pleaſure is too mean a name for the ſenſation he will have occaſioned, and you will after this find *Æſchylus* familiar.

In *Sophocles* you will find innumerable beauties, but they will be of another kind from thoſe you have admired in *Æſchylus*. Your attention will have been held too much upon the ſtretch in peruſing *Pindar*, and in dwelling upon *Æſchylus*; to the pleaſure of variety, you will have in *Sophocles* the advantage of a relief. *Sophocles* had fire enough, and he had a happy judgment. He knew where to temper that heat, which in the ungoverned mind of *Æſchylus* would have blazed with more violence than propriety; and not confining himſelf ſolely to the great, he has thrown in the pleaſing and the ſweet. His figures are not ſo bold as thoſe of *Æſchylus*, but they are more appropriated. At deſcription he was equal to all men; the death of *Oedipus* is as maſterly a piece of this kind as any thing that has been preſerved to us of all the Writings of antiquity. What can ſurpaſs his account of the outrageous heroe burying himſelf alive in the midſt of a prodigious tempeſt? His expreſſion, though not always lofty, is at times exalted and ennobled by every art and every ornament within the compaſs of the human mind; his images

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are more striking than any man's, and they are never out of the bounds of propriety. When you have seen his figure of the ghost of *Achilles* standing on his own monument, at the instant when the *Greeks* were going to weigh anchor, you will confess you have not met, nor do expect to meet, with any thing that equals it.

YOU will not wonder at the greater accuracy of *Sophocles*, or at his having avoided many of the faults of *Æschylus*. Many must have declined because they could not reach them, but this was not by any means the character of *Sophocles*. He had other, and those the next in power, of all reasons for his conduct. He had been the pupil of *Æschylus*; he had been instructed in all his excellencies, and informed of all the ways of attaining them; to this he had judgment of his own to distinguish the faults in his master's compositions, and added to this he had the judgment of his cotemporaries: for those who reverenced *Æschylus* most, did not reverence his failings.

SOPHOCLES was esteemed, and worthily, among his countrymen as the greatest man of his time. He was in the vigour of his faculties while his master was in the decline, and he was allowed an unpleasing superiority. *Æschylus* had reduced Tragedy to form, *Sophocles* added to his improvements. You will easily distinguish *Sophocles*, my Lord, as a more correct writer than *Æschylus*, but he is too much laboured. There is a grace, and it is a consummate one, in the wild beauties of *Æschylus*, that is wanting in the finished and studied expression of his scholar.

Sophocles

Sophocles was right in distinguishing the free scope which *Æschylus* gave to his fancy, as his greatest defect, but he has carried much too far that precise accuracy which it was indeed a deficiency in the other wholly to want. You will see also, my Lord, that where *Sophocles* is lofty and noble in his phrase, that phrase also is laboured, and in consequence of this he is often obscure in those very passages which would else be his greatest beauties. It is always thus in the sublime when it is forced, to be clear it must be natural.

TRAGEDY could not be a thing of all that difficulty in those days that it is in ours. With a Writer of these times, a Poem of this kind, and that often but a bad one too, is the work of two or three years. *Æschylus* wrote between sixty and seventy, and *Sophocles* near twice that number. But it convinces me of what I have often thought on these occasions, that those are the best pieces which have been written in the least time, provided the time be in any degree proportioned to the occasion. In those long continued labours the spirit sometimes soars and sometimes flags, and the latter end of the piece forgets, if not the matter, at least the manner of the beginning. When the thoughts are employed on the subject without interruption, and continued till they see the close, the several parts always hang together, and the whole is of a piece. Where there wants this, all the other excellencies of the world are bald and poor, and to this, which is seen in all the antient Tragedies, and which is hardly seen in any of those of the Moderns, is, I am apt to believe, in a great measure, owing that difference which we see between

tween the good plays of the one and of the other period.

EURIPIDES will please you, my dear Lord, on a nobler foundation than either the grandeur of *Æschylus*'s expression, or the softness and accuracy of that of *Sophocles*. *Euripides* abounds in the noblest morality of all the antient Poets; none has delivered so many lessons of this kind, nor any of them so happily. Our *Shakespear* has been censured for drawing women, in general, bad; but he has some amiable, and some great characters among them: *Euripides* deserves all the censure, and much more than all that has been passed on the *English* Poet, for his are almost all bad, and many of them infamously so. *Sophocles* has been more favourable to the sex than *Euripides* in his Plays, but he was not at all so in his private sentiments. His answer to the question, How it happened that he had drawn the women all good, and *Euripides* all bad? had more severity than all. *Euripides* had done in those characters; it is, said he, because *Euripides* draws them as they are, I draw them as they ought to be. *Socrates* did not escape some rallying on this score. He was not fond of the Tragic Poets in general, but whenever *Euripides* called upon him he was present at the theatre; he resolved this partiality into the respect he had for *Euripides*'s morals; but the ill-natured world would at that time, as it will now, know a man's reasons better than he does himself. *Socrates* had a wife whose qualities might most of them have been spared, and the wits of the age would have it that he honoured and loved *Euripides* for the justice which he did the

the ſex: but this was pleaſantry. The beſt good man in the world could not but love and eſteem the Author who moſt reſembled himſelf in his doctrines. The ſtyle and manner of *Euripides*, my dear Lord, are very peculiar. He differs from all the others in the ſedateneſs of his ſentiments, to which his expreſſion often, not to ſay always, for there are ſome exceptions, is happily ſuited: inſomuch that many of his paſſages are little more than ſeries of proverbial maxims, and the greater part of ſome of his Plays appear a collection of excellent ſentences, the plot being of little more uſe than to introduce them naturally, to connect them together, and imprint them the more deeply on the minds of men by means of the characters to which they were appropriated, and the conſequences they produced.

THERE is greatly more ſublimity in *Æſchylus* than in *Sophocles*, and yet there is much more in *Sophocles* than there is in *Euripides*; the laſt will therefore give the leaſt pleaſure of the three to the reader of ſpirit: but it is a pleaſure that will poſſeſs in continuance what it wants in the immediate degree: and its impreſſions will laſt while thoſe from the others are forgotten: when I mention *Euripides* as leſs pleaſing, I do not mean to point him out to you, my Lord, as leſs uſeful than the others; on the contrary, he is more ſo than either of thoſe can be: the ſtyle of the others is too exalted for imitation in ſpeaking, but that of *Euripides* comes nearer nature and I am convinced, my Lord, will pleaſe more; though I would allow the merit of all the loftineſſes of the other. If he is wanting in the ſublime, he is excellent in the pathetic, which

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is at leaſt as much in the province of the Orator as the other: no man affects the paſſions more happily: and, my Lord, it is a ſecret all know who arrive at eminence in this art, that he who has the paſſions will not be long without the reaſon.

ALTHOUGH there is not the ſublimity of the one, or the ſweetneſs and elegance of the other of the *Greek* Tragedians in *Euripides*, yet is his language, in its kind, equal to that of either. He is happy in the choice of his words; ſublimity is not what he attempts in that choice, but expreſſion, and nobody has hit that part of eloquence more happily: *Longinus* makes the arrangement of the words an article, and indeed a very great one in eloquence, and in this no man ever excelled the Author I am now recommending to your peculiar attention. His numbers are eaſy and elegant, his ſtyle is pure and perſpicuous.

THERE are many, there are indeed very many particulars in which the later Writers of Tragedy have fallen greatly beneath the antients; there are alſo thoſe in which the former have been inferior to the latter. What is called the plot and buſineſs of a Play is much better underſtood now than it was in thoſe famous times, and the variety of characters in our Plays are alſo a vaſt advantage. There was a flat ſimplicity, in this reſpect, in theſe reverenced Writers, and the worſt of ours as much excel them in this mechanical part, if I may ſo call it, of the Poem, as our greateſt fall below them in its eſſential parts, true Poetry and ſentiment.

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IN theſe authors, my dear Lord, you ſee the ſtate and perfection of the *Grecian* Tragedy; and you will wonder that thoſe who were able to carry its nobleſt part ſo high, neglected cultivating, though ſubſervient and neceſſary, the leſs important conſiderations. But, my Lord, there are certain ideas of which you muſt diveſt yourſelf before you determine upon this point: They ſaw the object in a different light from that in which we ſee it; and it is moſt certain, that if we could raiſe it to that perfection on our own plan to which they carried it on theirs, Tragedy would be the greateſt of human performances: They meant it as a great and moral poem, and all they meant they executed in it; we intend more, and what we intend is more right, but we do not execute what we intend in it.

THE Comedy of the *Greeks* was in its origin as rude as their Tragedy: It was at firſt no other than a kind of ſatire, the moſt open and the moſt licentious of all others: Two people ſtood up before the audience under the names of two of the greateſt, and perhaps the beſt men of the time, and in the groſſeſt, and often in the moſt unjuſt manner, abuſed and vilified one another: people were as fond of ſlander among the *Greeks* as they are among the *Engliſh*; and in one country as well as in the other, the greater the perſon the more welcome the abuſe; from a very rude beginning the popular applauſe encouraged this ſpecies of Comedy to a much more unpardonable height; and at length it became altogether unjuſtifiable and unwarrantable, and was baniſhed the ſtage.

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FROM this firſt period of the *Grecian* Comedy ſuppreſſed, aroſe the ſecond, in which the abuſe was not leſs vehement as the occaſions were juſtifiable; but to avoid the cenſure of the laws, the names of perſons were not mentioned; this is the ſubterfuge of thoſe ſo frequent in this kingdom for the evading the beſt laws that were ever framed; but this did not long ſerve the purpoſe: *Alexander*'s reign ſaw a law eſtabliſhed which made it criminal to publiſh ſcandal that ſhould be underſtood, although it had no name affixed to it. Thus dropped at once the licentiouſneſs of the antient Comedy; but the people were too much uſed to the entertainment to let it be wholly dropped, and it became neceſſary to deviſe a method entirely new. The whole now conſiſted of fictitious characters, and man, not any particular perſon, but man in the general, was its object.

You will be charmed with the ſpirit and wit of *Ariſtophanes*, though there are in him things that will pleaſe you leſs; nor will it be difficult for you determine about the ſtate of Comedy when he wrote. You will even find that all his plays were not written under the ſame condition of the ſtage; the wild and unjuſtifiable freedom of ſome of them, the inſult upon particular perſons in them, will ſhew you that they were exhibited at a Time when Comedy was left to all its looſe; and there are others that ſhew you times were altered and reſtraints eſtabliſhed at the period when they appeared. *Eupolis* and *Cratinus*, whom the other *Latin* poets mention, were at the head of the old Comedy among the *Greeks*; *Menander*

nander wrote at a time when regularity and decency were introduced into it: *Ariſtophanes* was between the two; and his plays that remain to us declare as much: You will admire his wit, but you will be diſpleaſed with his irregularity: There is often a great deal of true dignity in his language; and it is eaſy to ſee that, would the nature of his ſubject have allowed, there would have been more of this; it is often introduced unnaturally, and loſes much of its grace by that impropriety. You will ſee ſterling wit, though too much ill-nature in him; and in many parts, for it is not in all, you will have a pattern of the ſevereſt way of ſaying the ſevereſt things. I know your good-nature, my Lord, will repreſent this as of no uſe, but you will hereafter find it of neceſſity; and if you have from this writer the ſeverity and ſharpneſs of reproof, and all the force of raillery, and afterwards temper theſe with your own candour, you will have the perfect manner in which you are to repel the dart that malevolence may direct towards your perſon; or malignity of heart level at the cauſe which you eſpouſe.

I HAVE all along, my dear Lord, made the faults of the Claſſics, which I have pointed out as fully as their beauties, the rules of avoiding, as the others of purſuing what's wrong and what's right in them. If I were writing to any other perſon I ſhould be at great pains to warn him, while he admired the wit of *Ariſtophanes* not to adopt his indecency; but to you, my Lord, to name it is enough: You, whom I have ſo often heard lament the dirt that has ſullied the wit of *Swift*, will not need to be put in mind of

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not imitating the ſuperior faults of *Ariſtophanes* on the ſame foundation.

I HAVE obſerved to you, my dear Lord, that the *Greek* Tragedians, who were firſt famous in that ſpecies of poetry, were not ſo careful as they ought to have been to preſerve the purity of their characters, or to adapt the manners regularly; the ſame fault ſhews itſelf ſtill more conſpicuouſly in their Comedy, and in none of thoſe ſo conſpicuouſly as in the plays of *Ariſtophanes*. You muſt underſtand, or you will perceive, that it is the poet every where who ſpeaks, notwithſtanding that he prefixes the name of ſome character to what is delivered: it is the great misfortune of *Ariſtophanes* alſo that he ſhews no concern what character that is; his ſpeeches are by no means adapted to the perſons; and there is no diſtinction between the ſtyle of a goddeſs and a cook-maid: I would not be underſtood, my Lord, to mean this as univerſal and without exceptions; but indeed you will find very few to it: there are many paſſages in him that will diſguſt you, but there are alſo many that will charm you. Among the loweſt and poorеſt jokes that ever came from the hand of a poet, you will find ſome, and not a few, of the nobleſt morals: where he is great he is greatly ſo; and it has always been my opinion, perhaps I am ſingular in it, that where he is moſt grave he is beſt. His humour is not unnatural, but yet it does not fit ſo well upon him as his ſolemn thought. You will find a vaſt difference in his ſeveral plays: thoſe which abound moſt with the ſober are in my opinion the beſt; I am ſure you will call them ſo; and thoſe who have ſpoke otherwiſe

otherwiſe at the time of reading them have altered their minds afterwards. It would have been well if his plan would have admitted more of this, but it did not: His characters are almoſt all bad, and thoſe could not give him, with all his licentious ſcope, opportunities of introducing more of theſe his greateſt excellencies: I think him very blameable in the choice, and the world unhappy in it; for his genius, thrown into its proper channel, would have been of the higheſt honour to himſelf and of equal benefit to the world.

You will find many of the cenſures paſſed upon the Claſſics for obſcurity groundleſs; but it is not ſo with regard to *Ariſtophanes*; I would not pronounce all thoſe paſſages to be of this character which lexicon tranſlators and word critics have called ſo, but there are ſome which muſt retain the mark. Where they perplex you give them up, my Lord; many of them are not to be explained at all, and thoſe which are will not anſwer to the pains. You will have frequent occaſion to find fault with the manner of this writer, more frequent indeed than with his expreſſion; you will find him vain, arrogant, inſulting beyond all degree and meaſure, and that often where modeſty would have been the proper character of the paſſage: in fine, you will ſee much to admire, and much more to deſpiſe; you will find the diamonds rough in the mine, and ſcattered but ſparingly among the rubbiſh; but, my Lord, they are worth the picking out, and they are worth poliſhing; when you have wrought them they will become you well, and many of them will be worthy the crown of a monarch.

WHAT

WHAT *Sophocles* did by *Æſchylus*, my Lord, that has *Menander* done by *Ariſtophanes*; he ſaw his beauties, and as he viewed him with an equal, not a prejudiced eye, he ſaw alſo his defects. He adopted and he improved the one; and the other, he uſed as I hope you will do: he ſet them up as examples of thoſe things he was to ſhun, and as the more dangerous, as they were the errors and defects of a genius. In *Menander* you have all the wit, nay you have all the ſeverity of *Ariſtophanes*, I mean all the juſtifiable and all the decent ſeverity, but it is diſpoſed in ſuch a manner that the graces thrown about it add a new elegance and a beauty, of which, in reading the other, you would think it incapable, to every part. He is clear and expreſſive: he is ſhort and nervous: ſo much ſtrength has perhaps in no man been coupled with ſo much ſweetneſs. You will adore what remains of him, and you will condole with the world for the loſs of that ineſtimable treaſure which thoſe poſſeſſed who had his Works compleat.

YOU have ſeen the Tragic, and you have ſeen the Comic Muſe in her full ſtate in *Greece*. You will remember, that beſide the Heroic and the Lyric, with which I ſet out in this account of the *Greek* Poets, there are others worthy your notice: I do not intend they ſhall eſcape mine.

YOU know we have a peculiar ſpecies of Authors among us, who being neither perfectly of one kind or another, publiſh their detached pieces under the name of Poems upon ſeveral Occaſions.

Occaſions. *Theocritus* was one of theſe among the *Greeks*: a Miſcellany Writer; but ſuch a Miſcellany, my Lord, he has left us, as time will not deſtroy, perhaps in many parts will never equal. Few people have written upon more ſubjects, or thoſe more different in their nature, and few people have ſucceeded ſo happily in any of them. He ſeems to have been a Poet for diverſion, rather than from any ambition of immortality. He has confined himſelf, in a great part of his works, to the leaſt important ſubjects, and many of his pieces are occaſional, and addreſſed to particular friends, ſo that they loſe half their grace in our ignorance of the particular circumſtances. Notwithſtanding all theſe diſadvantages under which we read *Theocritus*, we admire him throughout. His Paſtorals are the moſt read; men indeed have confined themſelves ſo much to theſe, that many are ignorant of his having written any thing elſe: you, my Lord, muſt not remain in that number. The great attention which has been paid to theſe particular pieces among the many that he has left to the world, has been owing to the praiſe *Virgil* has beſtowed on them, who calls him the *Syracuſan* Muſe. But theſe are not ſuperior to ſeveral others. You will be ambitious to diſtinguiſh which of his Poems they were that obtained him this renown from the *Latin* Prince of Paſtoral, and you will eaſily diſtinguiſh them. His nine firſt Idylls, and the eleventh, for the tenth is of another kind, will at once convince you that they were the pieces which obtained that great applauſe from the *Latin* Poet, and that that they deſerved it.

THERE

THERE is the true ſpirit of Paſtoral in theſe more than in all that has been left us from antiquity. You have thought thoſe Poems in our own tongue pretty, which are called Paſtorals by Mr. *Pope*; but you will find they have nothing of the ſpirit or the language of this elegant ſpecies of verſification. You will agree with his friendly commentator, that theſe Poems of Mr. *Pope*'s are not Paſtorals: but, my Lord, as you will have learned the principles of that diſtinction from *Theocritus*, you will not ſay that they are ſomething better. The manners of the ſhepherds are perfectly preſerved in the *Greek* Writer, their language is ſo adapted that it could have become no mouth but theirs, nor could any language but this have become theirs. All ſeems pure nature, yet you have in them all the ornaments of art. There runs through them a pleaſing eaſe, a happy freedom, that takes off all the appearance of art, while it truly is the greateſt perfection of it, and there are happineſſes in the thought never to be enough admired, never to be imitated. You will be charmed with theſe Poems I know, my Lord, but you will be as highly charmed with his others. You will find in ſome all the dignity of *Pindar*, in others all the freedom and all the ſpirit of *Anacreon*. His magnificence of thought will aſtoniſh you in many places, and the harmony of his numbers in more, his propriety of expreſſion in all.

YOU have not heard of *Theocritus*, my Lord, as he deſerves to be mentioned. Read his death of the *Nemæan* Lion, and you will own he glows with all the fire of the *Iliad*. When you have

admired this as it deſerves, go through his hymn to *Caſtor* and *Pollux*, and you will own you have never ſeen the fervour of adoration, the enthuſiaſm of reverence, or the awe of devotion ſo ſtrongly expreſſed in any Author whatſoever: from theſe great, paſs to his little Poems, read over his wounded *Cupid*, and tell me if you would not fancy it a celebrated piece of *Anacreon*. I have often wiſhed for an opportunity of vindicating the name of *Theocritus* from the neglect which ſome have thrown upon him, and am glad this occaſion has fallen in my way to do it, the more ſo, as I am addreſſing my thoughts to you, my Lord, who will ſoon tell me whether this is due to the character of the Author, or ſome ſingular partiality in me.

I DO not tell you, my Lord, that *Theocritus* is in all reſpects ſuperior to *Virgil* in his Paſtorals: the *Roman* had the Advantage of all the experience of the *Greek*: he was to build upon a foundation already laid, his judgment is more nice, he is more regular, and has fewer faults than the *Grecian* whom he took for his model; but the *Greek* has more of nature, more ſweetneſs, and more ſimplicity. He has his wildneſſes, but even his wildneſſes are pleaſing. You have read the ruſtic madrigals of our own language, but you cannot have been pleaſed with them: few of the Authors have had the forbearance to omit pretty thoughts altho' they were not proper: in *Theocritus* you will find the chaſtity of the Paſtoral Poetry preſerved without blemiſh or interruption. You are at an age, my Lord, in which the tender ſentiments which adorn his compoſitions are naturally felt, and

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the more you are able to judge of their propriety, the more you will commend them. His love is every where the moſt tender and the moſt delicate, and though the expreſſion is varied to an almoſt infinite degree, there is nothing in it that departs from the true character of ſhepherds, and their unlettered ſimplicity. When I prefer *Theocritus* to *Virgil* in the purity of his Paſtoral, I cannot omit alſo to mention an advantage which the *Roman* wanted in the dialect in which he wrote. The *Doric* moſt happily ſuits the language of plain and ignorant people, and he has uſed it in all its advantages.

THE obſcurity of *Lycophron* has deterred many from looking into him, and has obtained him an ill character among the Critics; but theſe, my Lord, are a people by whom I would never have you abſolutely directed: I own *Lycophron* obſcure, but, my Lord, though he is obſcure he is not perplexed: though his connexion and his very meaning do not always lie open, he has every where underſtood himſelf, and the Author who does ſo, may always be underſtood by others, with the proper care in the reading of him. He deſerves this care, my Lord, attack him reſolutely, you will conquer all his difficulties, and you will poſſeſs a treaſure which many have loſt for want of that reſolution. Although I allow *Lycophron* to be obſcure, I do not allow it a fault that he is ſo. The nature of his Poem required it, nor is he in any part of the piece more ſo than is neceſſary. Where he may be clear, no Poet is more perſpicuous, and it is evident hence that this manner, for which he has been ſo ſeverely cenſured, was not natural

to him, but the reſult of his judgment, as appropriated to this particular ſubject. The Poem is a prophecy of *Caſſandra:* it is delivered by the keeper of the tower in which ſhe was lodged, to the King: he ſets out with obſerving, that ſhe was dark and obſcure in her preſages; and after this would the critic, who condemns *Lycophron*, have had him make the whole matter clear in the recital.

LYCOPHRON, my Lord, has all the fire and all the fury of *Pindar:* you will not only be delighted, you will be amazed and aſtoniſhed as you read him: there are paſſages in him equal to any thing in the Poets of greateſt name; and it would not be eaſy to point out in him any thing at which the greateſt of them would have needed to bluſh. The *Roman* Poets, and the very firſt of them, had an opinion of *Lycophron*, my Lord, very different from what the preſent cuſtom entertains. When you have read him, you will find that *Horace* has often copied him, and that he has been indebted to him for many of his moſt approved paſſages, the *Paſtor cum traheret per freta*, in which is the beautiful prophecy of the deſtruction that was to be the conſequence of the rape of *Helen*, is a very cloſe imitation of this excellent Poem: not only of many of its peculiar paſſages, but in the very ſubſtance and tenor of the whole: nor is this the only Ode in which you will trace him, paſſage after paſſage, making *Lycophron* his model. This was a thing very common with the *Latin* Poets, in regard to the *Greeks*; and we have been at the pains to trace it out in a number of them: but *Lycophron* is ſo little read, that I do

I do not know it has been ever obſerved that *Horace* has been obliged to him: nor indeed is *Horace* the only *Roman* that has been ſo obliged, though the others not ſo conſpicuouſly or ſo conſiderably.

CATULLUS, my Lord, has been as often indebted to *Callimachus*, as *Horace* to *Lycophron*; but to great good luck of the *Roman*, the Works of his original are in a great meaſure loſt. What remain to us of this Author are however of ſuch merit as to make us ſufficiently regret thoſe which are loſt. The compoſitions of this Poet were all of the leſſer kind, and to this it is very probably owing, in a great meaſure, that they have periſhed. They had merit enough to have preſerved them, but the art of Printing, which now keeps theſe ſhort pieces ſo happily together, was wanting.

YOU will be greatly pleaſed with what we have of *Callimachus*, and the profeſſed tranſlations of *Catullus* will give you an idea of the remainder. You will allow vaſt ſublimity to many of his expreſſions, and yet in the ſublimeſt of them he has nothing of that wildneſs which is too much the character of even the true ſublime in many Authors: the boldeſt of *Callimachus*'s flights are under the perfect regulation of a nice judgment: there is a peculiar grace which he throws over little things, and the ſame grace which dignifies theſe ſoftens the other. If I by no means agree with even *Ovid*, who gives him art in the place of genius, I allow him all that art in its higheſt perfection, in ſuch perfection, indeed, that it covers and diſguiſes the ſallies of

genius in such a manner that they are lost, and if the *Roman* Poet did not see them all, it is no wonder that the critics have seen none of them.

IT is not only the flights and sallies of his fancy that are thus disguised by his great art, and made to appear with an ease that speaks them the language of mere nature; his praise is in the same manner melted down by it, into the appearance of common opinion: and while he allows his subject all that flattery can bestow upon it, you think he is saying only what any body else said on the same occasion. He has a delicacy in this unknown to all the other Writers, and even that delicacy has not its natural appearance under the address that in him levels and renders all things familiar. When he gives into the enthusiasm of devotion, no Author is more perfectly inspired: you are awed while you read him, although you despise the very objects of his enthusiasm. You will discover, in all his pieces, the Gentleman and the Scholar: it will not be difficult for you to distinguish that he had passed his time in the court of one of the politest Kings, and that he was a master of all the learning of his time.

With all his beauties, *Callimachus*, however, is not without faults, and they are faults that will give you as much displeasure as any can. No Author is naturally more clear in his expression than *Callimachus*; but he has an unlucky affectation of using uncommon words, which render him obscure. He never thought proper to undertake any large work; and he has been held cheap for that, not only among the critics

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of our time, but among his rivals in his own: but what he wanted in length he made up in the number of his pieces: the account we have of them is very large, and it is a real misfortune that the account is all we have of almoſt the whole number.

I HAVE foreſeen much of your pleaſure, my dear Lord, in the turning over theſe noble remains of antient learning, and were I addreſſing myſelf to any other perſon of your Lordſhip's age, I ſhould ſay you would have great pleaſure in the *Argonauticks* of *Apollonius Rhodius*: but, I doubt it. You have not read, my dear Lord, a more correct Writer than *Apollonius*: you will not find a ſingle fault in him. You will perceive him going on in the ſame equal pace throughout the whole Poem, but this is little praiſe; as he ſinks into no faults he riſes to no beauties: and you, my Lord, who have been uſed to the flights of *Pindar*, and the majeſty of *Homer*, will not give much applauſe to this innocent mediocrity.

THIS character of *Apollonius*, my dear Lord, is from the days of the earlieſt critics. You have the judgment of *Longinus*, than whom no man would ſooner have found out a beauty, than whom no man would ſooner have praiſed one to confirm it, and the authority of *Quintilian* to ſtamp the character. You will find him, my Lord, laborious beyond all that you could have ſuppoſed of a *Grecian* Poet, and you will find a variety that would have pleaſed you, did it not declare itſelf to be a laboured variety. It has been ſuppoſed that he had a peculiar excellence

in touching the tender paſſions, but I ſee no great foundation for this. I have compared his amours of *Medea* with thoſe of *Dido*, into which thoſe who think moſt highly of *Apollonius* ſuppoſe the *Roman* copied many of his beauties, but I ſee nothing of it: where the ſubjects have happened to be moſt alike, there are ſentiments in the ſame degree alike alſo, but theſe are by no means the fineſt parts of *Virgil*'s deſcription, nor are they to be ſuppoſed imitations. He is familiar enough, and you will find no difficulty in running him over, but I do not recommend it to you to beſtow much time upon him.

THE Poet whom the Chriſtian Apoſtle quotes, τȣ̃ γὰρ καὶ γένος ἐσμέν, *for we alſo are his offſpring*, ſpeaking of the Creator of all things deſerves a more conſiderable attention. The Heathen whom St. *Paul* thought it worth while to quote, you, my Lord, will certainly think it worth while to read. *Aratus* is of a very different character from *Apollonius*, and there is great reaſon to lament the loſs of the far greater part of his pieces; what remain, probably, are not the beſt of his writings, at leaſt they are on unlucky ſubjects. The cuſtom of the times paid a greater reverence to the ſtars than the true philoſophy of this period will allow. But, my Lord, make the proper allowances for this unavoidable blemiſh, and you will think the Poet, according to the fables of his times, deſerves a place among thoſe ſtars which acquire a new luſtre from his account of them.

THE antients, while they believed in judicial Aſtrology, yet made it a diſtinct ſcience from Aſtro-

Aſtronomy, and as ſuch *Aratus* has treated it. He has divided his Work into two diſtinct parts. In the firſt he lays down the Aſtronomy of thoſe times in a happy manner: you will allow for its imperfections, my Lord, and you will then give it the higheſt praiſe. The ſubject was great, and he has treated it with a ſuitable dignity. In the laſt you have the erroneous opinion of thoſe times concerning the relations of the ſtars to one another, and their influence and effects on human bodies, this you will treat with a proper neglect as to the meaning; but when you ſee the manner in which the Poet has delivered it, you will lament that ſuch a genius had not ſufficient foundation in true knowledge. You, who will have read *Theocritus* before you meddle with this Author, will know what to think of him as a judge: the reverence with which he names *Aratus*, will countenance all your good opinion of him.

THERE is one *Greek* Poet more, my Lord, whom I am to name to you, and then we will conſider the *Latins*. No man was ever more unhappy in a ſubject than *Oppian*, and yet he has found the way to raiſe the theme as he purſues it. His moſt conſiderable piece is a Poem upon the fiſhes, and ways of fiſhing of the antients: we have another alſo of his on hunting, and we hear of a third on fowling, but that is not come down to us. One would imagine the ſecond to have been the happier ſubject, but the Halieutics was his firſt, and I muſt think is his beſt Poem. It is an odd matter upon which to exert the genius of the verſifier; but you will find, my Lord, that *Oppian* is every where elegant,

and in many places ſublime; he has beyond all men the art of beſtowing a grace upon things in themſelves ungraceful; he is every where correct; his language is ſoft and eaſy; his expreſſion peculiarly happy; and his numbers harmonious: You will find him copious on a ſubject apparently ſo barren, full of dignity on what might have been thought the meaneſt occaſion, and eaſy where you would ſuppoſe he muſt be dry: You will read no part of him, my Lord, without recollecting a ſtrong and a happy ſimilitude with *Virgil*, and you will own them a grace to one another.

IT is not only the poetical world that eſteem *Oppian*, the naturaliſts call him a treaſure of real knowledge; he is the happy means of our underſtanding thoſe early authors whom it would have been impoſſible for us to have otherwiſe made out; we know all the fiſhes he mentions, and by knowing what ſpecies he calls by ſuch or ſuch particular names, we alſo know what we are to underſtand by the ſame name where it occurs in an earlier writer, and denotes ſomething more than entertainment. This is a dry piece of criticiſm to you, my Lord, but without entering into the Spirit of it, you will be pleaſed to find that an author who can pleaſe may alſo be uſeful.

AS I obſerved to you, my Lord, in regard to the aſtronomy of *Aratus*, ſo with regard to the natural philoſophy of *Oppian*, you muſt make the neceſſary allowances for the faſhion of knowledge as well as for the degree of knowledge of the times: The antients were credulous in a great

great degree: Credulity in general depends indeed on a deficiency of knowledge, and is proportioned to the degree of that deficiency. You will not need to be told at this time, that reptiles of the earth do not go into the ſea to copulate with fiſhes; You will not believe that a creature can change its ſex after a year; or that the ſkins of animals which live in enmity retain that enmity to the laſt, and ſhew it after they are dreſſed for common uſe. Theſe were things religiouſly believed in *Oppian*'s time, and he is not therefore to be condemned for repeating them: You will know in what degree of regard to place theſe things: for the reſt, believe me, my Lord, you cannot hold the author in more eſteem than he deſerves: Princes are not always the beſt judges in the world, but they have always thoſe about them who can ſupply the deficiency: You have been told of the reward this poet obtained for his Halieutics from *Caracalla*, and you will receive this as a collateral teſtimony of his worth, though you would not have held it in much regard as a primary.

I SHALL enter upon the *Roman* poetry at their Comedy. You will not wonder to ſee me place *Plautus* at the head of it: You will read him with vaſt ſatisfaction, with more than ſatisfaction, with infinite delight: But, my Lord, in order to judge of the *Roman* Comedy you muſt do as you have already done in regard to the *Greek* Tragedy; you muſt diveſt yourſelf of thoſe ideas which men are apt to imbibe from the Comedy of the preſent age, and from which they are too apt to judge of Comedy in gene-

ral, before you can determine any thing properly in regard to that of the antients. The *Roman* Comedy is not nearly ſo much different from the *Engliſh*, as is the Tragedy of the *Greeks* from that of all the modern nations; yet it is different enough to require other rules for judging of it. The Comedy of *Plautus* is not ſo different from that of this time as that of *Terence*, and yet there is enough in it that would be very ſtrangely received by a modern audience. In the Comedies of *Plautus* and of *Terence* you ſee, my Lord, two extremes, between which the *Engliſh* Comedy has attempted to hit a happy medium, and I think it has in a great meaſure ſucceeded in the attempt; that, however, is a ſubject foreign to the preſent conſideration. A great part of *Plautus* is too light, and the greateſt part of *Terence* is too heavy, too grave for the modern notion of Comedy; *Terence* often runs into Tragedy, and *Plautus* into Farce. It is certain, that among the *Engliſh* Comedies, there are ſome that have nothing of the one or the other extreme; our taſte approves theſe and it is right: But as the taſte of the times when theſe authors wrote approved ſomething elſe inſtead of this, we are to arraign that taſte in many things rather than thoſe authors who found it neceſſary to write up, or to write down to it.

You will ſee in *Plautus* a happy fertility of invention, which none that we know of before him, and which we moſt certainly know that none after him, poſſeſſed: He has a copiouſneſs of imagination that has been, and that will continue to be, unrivaled: He has ſhewn great judgment in the choice and in the conduct of his fable;

fable; his characters are all natural; and there runs through all his works a rich vein of eaſe that apologizes for a thouſand faults.

Plautus, my Lord, has alſo faults enough to need all this atonement: He is full of what he certainly underſtood to be wit, and what probably the vulgar of thoſe times, by whatever title diſtinguiſhed, or in whatever rank diſtributed, took to be wit too; poſſibly had the general opinion been otherwiſe, he would have been as full of true wit as he he is of falſe; as eminent for the delicate as he is now conſpicuous for the low. Certainly there are paſſages in *Plautus* that ſhew him maſter enough of this, and I think judge enough to have approved and preferred it to the other; but as certain it is that eſſential as wit muſt be allowed to Comedy, there is very little of what deſerves that honourable name in *Plautus*. Raillery is another of the great ſupports of comedy, and in this *Plautus* alſo is deficient; I do not mean, my Lord, that he is wanting in the quantity of this, for there is abundance of it; but in quality, for it is flat and poor, and I ſhould imagine could only have pleaſed the loweſt part of the audiences of that time I am the more of opinion that the taſte of the million impoſed this manner of writing upon *Plautus* in that he labours to introduce it: this is viſible in a thouſand places, and it has given to many of his ſcenes all that diſagreeable quaintneſs which we condemn in ſome of *Congreve*'s, in which the ſpeech of one of the characters is only calculated to give occaſion for a criticiſm in the other: In this, however, the *Engliſh* has infinitely the preference of the *Roman* Comedian, that his wit is

is always delicate though often out of character; whereas that of *Plautus* is almoſt always indelicate, and is out of character too. You will often pity him, my Lord, for his attempts to wit; but when you conſider it as neceſſary and laboured, and far fetched, you will be the leſs ſurprized that it is jejune and puerile: You will often cenſure him for the extravagance of his figures, and you will often ſmile at him for being inſipid, but there is a fault for which you will condemn him; he is often obſcene: If we allow the point of an audience approving this we ſhall the leſs wonder, and though we condemn, we ſhall the leſs condemn the writer; we ſhall ſee him in the light of one who does things that are wrong, not becauſe they are ſo, but that thoſe whom he is to pleaſe will have them.

IF you compare *Plautus* and *Terence* in this light, my Lord, you will ſee the one a careleſs, the other an accurate writer; the one producing the offſpring of his brain for immediate advantage, the other for future fame: You will ſee the one writing like a mercenary, the other like a gentleman: *Plautus* made it his point to pleaſe the multitude, and he would venture any thing to do it; *Terence* deſpiſed applauſe, except from the judicious; he therefore hazarded nothing, but conſidered every thing in the ſtricteſt light before he publiſhed it. It is certain that *Terence* muſt have ſucceeded better than *Plautus* in pleaſing the choſen few; it is as certain that his pieces are in a great meaſure calculated for the cloſet; the others wholly for the ſtage; and yet with all this there is ſomething in the vivacity and fire of *Plautus* that with all his levities

pleaſes

pleases me more than the cold regularity of *Terence*.

THE applause which *Terence* received among the *Romans* was great, and it was all deserved; but *Plautus* often called forth a greater share of the thunder of the theatre, as dear to authors of those days as to those of ours; and if *Terence* pleased more, *Plautus* pleased oftener. The *Eunuch* was the play best received of all those of *Terence*; but that is saying too little; it was received with marks of distinction never paid to any Comedy before; the other five were also universally esteemed, and no man dared to criticise upon them.

TERENCE has had the fate of *Cibber*; his plays were thought too good to be his own. The *Andria*, which was his first, was said to be in a great part written by *Scipio*, who, though he had genius to command applause in the polite arts, had other lawrels in comparison of which he held the ray of *Phœbus* in contempt: It has not been told, it has not been suspected, who assisted Mr. *Cibber* in the *Careless Husband*, but certainly had any body done so, it could not have slept in silence. The praise of having written, or of having but contributed to the writing the best Comedy in the *English* language, is what none who had a right to it would have despised. Had the *Romans* looked a little farther they would have found to whom he was obliged for all the beauties of that play, tho' not to *Scipio*: he took them from *Menander*; but who is the *Grecian* from whose stores the *Careless Husband* has derived its excellencies?

TERENCE,

TERENCE, my Lord, has a great deal of nature in his Comedies: No man ſeems to have penetrated more deeply into the ſecrets of the human heart; thoſe who have nature, have generally valued themſelves upon it to a degree of making them neglect all other qualifications; or they have let it run away with them at all times and on all occaſions; neither of theſe can be charged on *Terence*: with the greateſt fund of nature he has connected all the ſtores of art; he is accurate and correct beyond all the *Roman* poets, and has ſhewn more judgment than all that went before him: he is full of beauty, but it is of a peculiar kind: *Terence* is one of thoſe faces that not only appear pleaſing at firſt, but charm us as we contemplate and conſider them. The moſt conſummate elegance runs through all his productions, and where he is pleaſant it acquires a new beauty from the reſerve, under which he always exerts that part of the comedian's character: There is in him no glaring ornament at the expence of propriety; whatever you like in him you will continue to like; and there is, my Lord, yet another conſideration in his favour, which is, that he is the pureſt and moſt elegant of all the *Roman* writers; if you would place before you, my Lord, a model of what is perfect in the *Latin* language the ſtyle of *Terence* ſhews it.

THESE are high praiſes, and you will at firſt ſight imagine I place him at a height with which the faulty *Plautus* cannot hope to reach in quality of a rival; and yet, my Lord, I ſhall repeat the opinion that you will read

read the other, if not with as perfect an applauſe, at leaſt with equal pleaſure.

IF *Terence* have the advantage, if he have the greateſt advantage imaginable, for ſo it certainly is, over *Plautus* in point of ſtyle, yet ſtyle is not all that goes to conſtitute a Comedian: and if you ſee with the eyes of a modern critic upon Comedy, you will give it for the coarſe *Plautus* againſt the elegant friend of *Scipio*. The hurry, the buſtle, the buſineſs of the Theatre is admirably contrived in *Plautus*, and there is very little of it in *Terence*. Incidents are thick ſown in the one, and they are very ſparing in the other, and the fire, and ſpirit, and archneſs, and repartee, of *Plautus*, I am aſſured, would ſtand with a modern audience on a footing of preference againſt all the true wit of the calm *Terence*. Variety is another thing of conſequence in the compariſon, and this is intirely on the ſide of *Plautus*. The people who moſt favour *Terence* muſt own there is a great ſameneſs in his manner, and indeed this will always be the caſe when all is laboured; but it is otherwiſe with the eaſy *Plautus*. He is full of variety in his characters, and he is as full of it in his expreſſion. Take half a dozen paſſages out of *Terence* where you will, and they will all be known to belong to *Terence*, but take as many from *Plautus* and they would be ſuppoſed the work of different, perhaps of as many different Authors. If *Plautus* has an infinity of faults which *Terence* has not, he has alſo beauties, and thoſe very numerous, at which *Terence* never aimed. It is not at all a point of diſpute whether *Terence* or *Plautus* be the finer Poet, but if it were to be aſked

aſked which has written the beſt Comedies, the Plays of which of the two moſt anſwer the character of Plays, and are moſt fit for the ſtage? I believe you would anſwer *Plautus*.

You will nowhere meet with ſo perfect a ſyſtem of the *Epicurean* Philoſophy as in *Lucretius*: and aſſuredly no ſyſtem of Philoſophy was ever ſo elegantly delivered. It has been ſaid that great geniuſes are very nearly allied to madmen: it appears ſo in this Author, for he was at once one of the greateſt geniuſes the world produced, and he was diſtracted. It is aſſerted that this Poem was written in the lucid intervals of that melancholly diſtemper, but they muſt have been lucid intervals indeed, for with all the flight of fancy that appears in them, there is no want of judgment: tight as the cord is often drawn, it has nowhere flown.

You will not imagine, my Lord, that while I am celebrating the manner in which *Lucretius* has delivered the ſyſtem of *Epicurus*, I am praiſing the tenets of that ſyſtem. You will find it plauſible in ſome parts, and in very few more than plauſible: in the whole you will find it, on a cloſe conſideration, abſurd and idle, and you will congratulate yourſelf on having been born in an age of ſo much greater knowledge.

You need not be told, my dear Lord, to hold his ſyſtem at nothing: for the reſt you need not fear eſteeming the Author too highly. You cannot praiſe him more than he deſerves. His language is at once correct and elegant: in both reſpects he equals *Terence*, and in the advantage

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of his meaſure he ſhews thoſe graces in a vaſtly happier light. You will, when you come to read *Virgil* after him, find many of thoſe things which challenge moſt reſpect in that immortal Author copied from this Poet.

IT was a happineſs, and a very great one, to *Virgil*, that he lived in the period when the *Latin* language was in its greateſt purity and perfection: this was not the caſe with *Lucretius*, the tongue was coming towards its purity, but not arrived fully at it. *Lucretius* wrote not a vaſt many years before the other, but all the years that paſſed between were ſpent in the poliſhing and bringing it to that perfection at which it was in *Virgil*'s time, and beyond which it never arrived. Your nice diſcernment, my Lord, I know, will ſee the diſadvantage under which the Poet labours, in this reſpect. You will ſee that, with all the natural eloquence of *Virgil*, he is not ſo elegant: the cauſe lies here, and the Author is not to be charged with that which was the imperfection of the language. There are many parts of his Poem which, in their own nature, could not be capable of ornament. He is employed in ſeveral places on things in themſelves incapable of beauty, and which, in any other hand, would have paſſed as incapable alſo of regularity. His addreſs in bringing theſe into form is admirable: you will ſee it, my Lord, though many are blind to it; and you will, I believe, agree with me, that much of the leaſt beautiful part of his Work is the moſt wonderful, and does him the greateſt honour.

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BUT, my Lord, although ſome parts of his Work were incapable of beauty, and would have been, in any other hand, incapable of order; there are many others, in which all that the Poet's art can reach, is within the compaſs, and is proper to the nature of the ſubject. Nature herſelf is the great theme, the moſt copious, and the moſt beautiful of all, and he has, in theſe parts, riſen to heighths beyond which no Writer ever ſoared, to which I do not expect to ſee any other arrive.

YOU will not wonder, my Lord, that in the leſs favourable parts of his Work the verſe loiters or ſticks; it is in ſome paſſages rough and coarſe, in many there is only the quantity to diſtinguiſh it from proſe. Boys, and boy-like critics may ſuppoſe this all the character of verſe, but your Lordſhip will not judge ſo. To ſee what is true verſe, and condemn the other by the compariſon, there is no occaſion to go farther than the ſame Poet. He is, in other parts, elevated, harmonious, and varied beyond moſt of the moſt celebrated. Beſide that *Lucretius* is in ſome places rough, he is alſo in ſome obſcure. But this is not his talent, it is not natural to the Poet, but neceſſary to the ſubject. The ſyſtem which he had to ſupport was a falſe one, and wherever there is not truth there will be perplexity. It would not have been eaſy in any form of words to lay down what he had to ſay with perfect clearneſs; in verſe it was leſs eaſy, and the neceſſity of harmony in the arrangement, added to the taſk and to the obſcurity. This, however, is to be advanced in his favour, he is no where

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ſo obſcure but you will, with a little attention, make him out with all plainneſs; and if there be perplexity in the thought you will abſolve the language.

YOU will know, my Lord, where to diſregard his principles, and you will know how to attribute their error not to any fault or weakneſs in the Poet, but to the ignorance of the times. For the reſt you will find ſound morality and excellent advice couched under the moſt pleaſing form. You will find him ſententious and ſuccinct, with ſtrength, in his admonitions, nobly elevated, and awfully ſerious in his exhortations, gay and florid in his deſcriptions, and in his diſputes, although they are upon the moſt difficult and intricate ſubjects, if not always right, always with the appearance of right, cloſe, argumentative, and convincing.

IT is pity ſo much eloquence was not employed in a better cauſe. Whenever he is right he is greatly ſo; his arguments are unanſwerable, and the ſtrength with which he applies them is irreſiſtible; but you will pity him, my Lord, when you ſee him degrading theſe talents, by employing them in the cauſe of atheiſm and impiety. I am ſorry to ſay, that I believe he was himſelf really of the opinions, abſurd as they are, which he has advanced; but in this we are to pity him, in regard to the dark times in which he lived. You will be ſenſible enough of the badneſs of his cauſe; and you will not fail to diſcover his weakneſs in many of thoſe arguments in which he affects to take the moſt pride; but this was diſingenuous, he knew they were no more

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than fallacy, although he would have perſuaded others that he paid them more reſpect.

I HARDLY know, among the Claſſics, any one of whom it is ſo difficult to give a character as *Catullus*. The occaſion is in the ſubject. There is no Author ſo unequal to himſelf. Read him in one part and you are charmed with his wit and aſtoniſhed at his knowledge. Go a little farther and you ſmile at empty eloquence, a pomp of words full of ſound but empty of ſignification. In one place his verſe is rough and inelegant, but his ſenſe is manly and nervous, and you have little more regard to the ſound of the verſe in reading, than the Author ſeems to have had in writing them. In another place he is all flowing ſoftneſs, his lines glide after one another without one aſperity, as ſoft, as ſmooth, as the waters of ſome ſlow rivulet; and as inſipid.

THERE is alſo another fault in *Catullus*, which, in my opinion, and I know it will be alſo in yours, ſinks him beneath all the reſt of the old Poets; he is more obſcure in his ideas, and leſs guarded in his expreſſions than them all. There is a proſpect in many of his pieces, of the Author's ſome time arriving at the higheſt excellence in his profeſſion, but he died young. If we could ſeparate the unjuſtifiable wantonneſs from his love Poems, there are ſome of them that would be read with very high applauſe, but he has found the way to blaſt that reputation he might have acquired, even in the things by which he would have made it. We have not all his Works, my Lord; but by the titles of ſome of thoſe which are wanting, one may gueſs that they might

might be ſpared. A Poem on the God *Priapus*, by ſuch an Author as *Catullus*, muſt have been a piece too infamous for any leſs abandoned than his own *Leſbia*, or his two infamous friends, *Amelius* and *Furius*. You will find in his *Acme* and *Septimius* a vaſt deal of beauty. His Poem on *Leſbia*'s ſparrow, which ſome who know little of chronology, and have not been able to underſtand *Martial*, have ſuppoſed he dedicated to *Virgil*, would have been worthy the patronage of that divine Poet. His tranſlations from the *Greek* are ſome of them very fine, that from *Callimachus* of the *Coma Berenice* is an inſtance of this. In this and his other Tranſlation from the old *Greek* Poets, he executed that which his countrymen had before ſuppoſed impracticable; he preſerved all the ſpirit and meaning of the Author, and gave his own piece all the beauty and eaſe of an original. The Epigrams of *Catullus* will not pleaſe ſome ſo well as thoſe of many meaner Poets; but, my Lord, they will be preferred by you even to thoſe of the greateſt: you will admire *Martial*, he will always pleaſe by the addreſs of cloſing a happy delicacy of ſome common thought by an unexpected word. There is a merit in this, it is pretty; but, my Lord, *Catullus* is more than pretty in this little kind of Poetry, he is great. His countrymen honoured him with the title of the Learned, from his happy underſtanding and elegant verſions of the *Greeks*: he had ſtudied thoſe Authors in all things, and he had brought into his own language their peculiar manner in the Epigram. I doubt not but when you read, in a younger time, the *Greek* Epigrams that are preſerved to us, you thought them inſipid; you will now think them great.

great. You will in the ſame manner judge of thoſe of *Catullus*, I eſteem them the beſt in the World. They always contain a ſingle thought that is quite natural, but refined, and that is cloathed in a delicate turn of words. There is not the brilliancy in this that appears in the little things of the ſame Author that aim at ſmartneſs, but there is a much greater merit, propriety and elegance.

I HAVE purpoſely omitted to mention to you ſeveral pieces of this Author: you will omit alſo to read them. I ſet out with hinting to you his faults as well as excellencies, and I did it that you might be cautious how you applauded.

MANY of the *Latin* Poets have poſſeſſed many of the requiſites for Poetry in a very eminent degree; *Virgil* poſſeſſed them all, and it is not eaſy to ſay that he had any one of them in a peculiar degree of perfection: they were all blended in him as they ought to be, each had its juſt proportion, and the reſult was, for how ſhould it be otherwiſe, that he was the greateſt Poet of the *Roman* world: doubtleſs after *Homer* the greateſt that ever exiſted. It is not eaſy to ſay for what *Virgil* was moſt qualified: he has written on the moſt different ſubjects, and with equal happineſs on all. His *Georgicks* are on a ſubject in itſelf very barren of ornament, but his genius has made them the greateſt Poem perhaps in the world. In his *Bucolicks* there is all the eaſe and nature of *Theocritus*, that is of nature herſelf, and with it all the elegance of the politeſt and moſt finiſhed character, yet the beauties ſo blended with, ſo

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melted down into the plainneſs of the ſubject, that they nowhere offend, or wear a character contrary to the nature of the piece. Laſt, let me mention the *Æneid*, excellent in its kind as the others, and like them the ſtandard of what is perfect in its way in the *Roman* language. The dignity of this whole Poem is continued, like the majeſty of *Homer* in the *Iliad*, with one equal pace throughout, and without once ſtopping, or once ſinking from its character. He is at once grand and elegant, at once conciſe and perſpicuous; his figures are thrown in with a freedom that appears in no other Writer, and yet that nowhere ſavours of boldneſs. His ſound is always connected with, and expreſſive of, the ſenſe; his language the moſt eloquent, his words the moſt happily choſen, and their arrangement the moſt pleaſing, as well as proper, that appears in any Writer: where it is neceſſary, or where it is but proper to be ſmooth, he has a ſoftneſs unparalleled, but it is only where it is proper, far from aiming at a reputation on this head, he ſeems, in all other places, to have neglected the conſideration, not out of inattention, but a ſettled diſregard. No man has poſſeſſed ſo great a ſpirit, no man ſo happy a judgment. This has been his peculiar fortune, theſe tempered by one another, have given that force and propriety to his Poems, that he is every where full without overflowing any where; in every part great, in none extravagant. He has all the delicacy of the *Greek* Epigram in many paſſages, but he in none condeſcends to the turn of the *Latin*. He is lofty in his conceptions, and though his expreſſion anſwers to them, yet it never froths and foams. He has nothing of that ambition to ſay

unobvious things, which has characteriſed too many of the great Writers of his time, and conſequently he never falls into that puerility which is the natural offſpring of thoſe labours. His thought is every where appropriated, nor is there any occaſion in which he has not power to raiſe it to the proper height, and his language has all the ſublimity that is proper to accompany ſuch ſentiments. *Homer* is admired, and with the higheſt reaſon, for the variety in his numbers; *Virgil* deſerves the ſame praiſe in a very high, though not in an equal degree. Beſide a ſuperior genius, for that muſt be allowed to the *Grecian*, even by the warmeſt advocates for *Virgil*, he poſſeſſed an infinite advantage in his language, his being not only a more copious and more ſounding language, but allowing an almoſt infinite variation from its dialects, no part of which belongs to the *Latin*. If we compare the two, the glories of *Homer* do not at all eclipſe the beauties of his follower. If invention were the talent of *Homer*, *Virgil* aſſuredly excels in judgment. Many of thoſe things which *Homer* ſuffered, and ſome of which his critics have applauded, would not have been permitted under the ſeverer ſcrutiny of *Virgil*, and it is probable that the *Roman* Poet ſunk in oblivion many things that would have added to the reputation of his own Work, not conſidering that thoſe who read would not poſſeſs ſo nice and diſtinguiſhing a taſte. *Homer* is greater than *Virgil*, but the ſedateneſs of *Virgil* has its majeſty, which to ſome, and thoſe the moſt perfect judges, ſets itſelf upon a level with all the impetuoſity of the *Greek*. Their excellencies, although they have written upon the ſame plan,

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are different, and the applauſe which you pay to the one, will not at all interfere with that praiſe which is the due of the other.

You will find beauties of a new kind, my Lord, in *Horace*. The form of his Poems gives him an advantage in point of numbers and harmony which *Virgil* wanted, and he has employed it all. As you have ſeen *Virgil* ſo you will ſee *Horace*, in many different lights, and excellent in all. In the ſatires you find him neglecting the muſical ſound for nervous ſenſe and juſt ſeverity. Theſe are the characters of ſuch pieces. On the other hand, when you look into his Odes, a ſpecies of Poetry one of whoſe greateſt elegancies is harmony, you find him beyond all the *Roman* Authors in the ſelect choice and the accurate and varied diſpoſition of his words. There is no Author in the *Roman* language who comes near him for the delicacy and compleat elegance of ſuch of his Odes as required, or as but permitted this beauty: look carefully into his addreſs to *Melpomene*, and you will ſee an example of all this accuracy, and you will find it drawn in that flow of eaſe which he has thrown over all. The ſound and the arrangement of the words of *Sappho*, although that Poeteſs had the command of a happier language, are not ſuperior to thoſe of *Horace* in this article. To ſay that is to acknowledge he has done all that mortal genius can aſpire unto. He has, in many of his Odes, all the fire, all the dignity, and all the rapid boldneſs of *Pindar:* when the Gods and ſacred ſubjects are his theme, *Homer* can hardly ſurpaſs him in majeſty. He is ſublime and auguſt without oſtentation when he praiſes his

heroes, and however different the talents may ſeem that ſhould qualify a man for ſo diſtinct a manner; he is as ſevere and keen in his reproaches as the bittereſt of the *Greeks*, and in his gayer pieces as lively. *Anacreon* hardly excels him in ſome of his jovial pieces, and it has been allowed by all, that in the Ode where he calls *Pindar* unequalled, he has equalled him.

ALL his words expreſs juſt as much, and no more than as much as he would have; and with all that ſtrictneſs of judgment in the ſelecting them, he has not excluded ſpirit; they have force with their elegance, and theſe mutually adorn and animate one another. As a ſatyriſt, you, my Lord, I know, will reſpect him more than any other. There are men, nay moſt men are of the number, that think nothing ſevere that is not bloody, but with you, the raillery of *Horace*, genteel and eaſy as it is, will pleaſe beyond all harſher ſeverity.

THE Elegies of *Tibullus*, my Lord, will exhibit to you the moſt perfect and maſterly examples in that way of writing, and I know none that is more pleaſing. There are men, and they have been judges in ſome degree too, who have preferred *Propertius* to this Author, and the reaſon is evident: *Propertius* is more lofty, and this has charms for thoſe who have not themſelves delicacy enough to taſte the refined beauties of elegance. This, however, may determine the diſpute, that elegance and not grandeur are the character of the Elegy, and therefore he who has excelled in that which was proper deſerves a higher praiſe than his rival, who has pleaſed

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or who has charmed at the expence of that propriety.

A GENTLE ſolemnity, a pleaſing languor, and an indulgence in melancholly, are the true and genuine ſpirit of Elegy: complaint is almoſt its natural language, and if love, under whatever circumſtance, commands its voice, it is becauſe love is the ſofteſt of all paſſions, and is too often unhappy. According to this ſenſe of the nature of Elegy, *Tibullus* bears the prize for it not only from *Propertius*, but from one who with much more juſtice diſputes it with him, from *Ovid*. He is gentle, eaſy, elegant and polite. His tenderneſs is unequalled, and there runs an appearance of nature through all his works, which ſtamps on them an indelible character of excellence. *Ovid* has even more of nature than this Author, and you will hardly wonder, my Lord, that, on this foundation, ſome who were very good judges, have preferred him to both. But, Nature, though a great deal, is not all in elegy; to determine with propriety of the candidates, we muſt take in the whole character of the Poem. *Ovid* wants the ſimplicity of *Tibullus*, and this is a firſt character. I do not ſay, my Lord, that *Ovid* could not have written better Elegies than *Tibullus*, certainly he has not; and to me it appears that out of a deſire to do too much, he has departed from propriety. He has many things which would be fine in any other kind of Poem, but they are too much for Elegy. *Ovid* is laſcivious, and this is by no means adapted to the innocence of this Poem.

THERE is, beſide the gentleneſs and ſoftneſs of *Tibullus*, an unaffected humility in all his thoughts, which gives a happy grace to this ſpecies of Poem: yet though always ſubmiſſive he is never mean: he has hit the exact medium upon which the great beauty of the Elegy depends, and none has followed him with any degree of ſucceſs in it. He does not quit this ſoftneſs, or this humility in any part, doubtleſs he has thrown by many elegancies that were not compatible with it: but he judiciouſly preferred being uniform, conſiſtent, and in character, to all the wild beauties that have, with ſome people, given *Propertius* the advantage.

TIBULLUS, in my opinion, has excelled not only the *Roman* but the *Greek* Elegiaſt: and this ſeems to have been his proper ſphere; indeed the only one in which he could move with grace. His panegyric on *Meſſala*, if it be his, ſhews that he had no talent for the ſublime Poetry, and we ought to give him great praiſe for having had the judgment not to attempt that which was not of his province.

THERE is a life and ſpirit in *Propertius*, my dear Lord, that will greatly recommend him to your favour. No man is ſo much a lover. He burns in every line, and the character of his paſſion is earneſtneſs, as that of *Tibullus* is ſoftneſs. You will find that he was perfectly acquainted with all the *Greeks* had done in this ſpecies of Poetry; and he has, in ſome degree, formed himſelf upon them: but the natural and genuine turn of *Tibullus* is to me greatly preferable. If great

great learning were neceſſary to the ſucceeding in the elegiac writings of thoſe times, no man could have been more qualified to demand that prize which has been diſputed between the three than *Propertius*; but it is not learning or knowledge in the ſciences that ſtamp the character on this ſpecies of writing; every thing ought to be plain in elegy, but in the elegies of *Propertius* there is much abſtruſe knowledge; this has its value, but it is out of its place: there is alſo an affectation in his writings, his words, which, far from being beautiful, is I think highly faulty; his cutting off the prefixes of the compound verbs gives ſomething very peculiar to his manner; it has no grace, and it may very well be accuſed of aukwardneſs: If you were younger, I ſhould mention it to you as a thing that might puzzle you in underſtanding him, but you are paſt thoſe difficulties.

PHÆDRUS, my Lord, is the oppoſite to *Propertius* in this reſpect; no *Latin* is ſo familiar as that of this author; this ſingle circumſtance has degraded him into the rank of one of the firſt ſchool-books, and thoſe who have read him when children, and have from that taken up an opinion that he is only fit to be read by children, never look into him afterwards. I flatter myſelf, that you are above theſe prejudices: You will find it the eaſieſt of all taſks to get through him again; and I flatter myſelf you will hold in no mean eſtimation a piece, the *Latin* of which is equal to that of *Terence* in elegance and purity.

NOTWITHSTANDING, my Lord, that I have on a former occaſion mentioned the aſtronomy

of the antients with concern for its imperfection, and their aſtrology ſometimes with contempt, there is an Author who profeſſedly treats of theſe whom I ſhall recommend to your careful peruſal. You are already informed, what degree of regard is to be paid to the ſyſtems of thoſe times; you will be extremely pleaſed with the manner in which *Manilius* has treated them; you will ſee a ſurpriſing genius in him; a fire, a ſpirit, a boldneſs equal to almoſt any thing that appears among the greateſt of the others. But while you reverence him for this, you will lament his want of judgment to correct the impetuoſity of genius that runs away with him; but you will pardon all his faults: He was very young when he wrote the work, and he died before he could either finiſh or reviſe it. I ſhould think it dangerous to recommend this author to any one who had not an eſtabliſhed taſte; but, my Lord, under the advantages with which you will read him his very faults will have their uſe: You will ſee the errors, the very great errors into which an unreſtrained genius will run; errors, into which none but a genius could run; and where you ſee the effect of his licentious freedoms and avowed wildneſs, you will remember that ſuch are your great dangers and ſuch their conſequences.

I HAVE led you, my Lord, through a vaſt number of poets to *Ovid:* Nature is his knowledge, and eaſe the character of his writings; you have admired others, but you will love *Ovid.* I would not be underſtood, my Lord, in this to mean that *Ovid* has leſs in him to be admired than the others; he is, where it is proper, great

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as any of them, but he knows where to be tender; none knew the ſecret avenues to the ſoul ſo well as he; and he has put all his knowledged into force; and leaving it to others to aim at the head, he has levelled all his artillery at the heart: His language is elegant and eaſy; his numbers are ſoft and flowing; and his expreſſion every where appropriated to the ſubject in the moſt affecting and aſtoniſhing manner: Where it is proper to be plain no man ever equaled him in ſimplicity; when there is room for ornament you will find it no where in ſuch profuſion: He is grave and inſtructive in many places, and this with an elegance peculiar to himſelf; in others he is gay and wanton beyond all men. They give an early impreſſion very little in favour of *Ovid*, by making his book *De Triſtibus* the firſt which is read by youth. The author is not at all himſelf in this performance; his ſpirit is broke by his condition; and genius itſelf finds it impoſſible to diſplay its radiance under the diſtreſs of ſuch a ſituation.

IN his other works he ſtrikes the heart in every ſentiment: his language charms while his ſpirit as it were communicates itſelf to the reader, and inſpires him with all the enthuſiaſm of the writer; and there is ſuch an extent and variety in his ſubject, that he has in one part or other of his works taken in almoſt all that is elegant in the *Roman* language.

I HAVE always declared it my intention, my Lord, to point out to you an author's defects as well as his excellencies that you may not ſuppoſe any one a perfect model, or take his faults, as

they are his, for beauties. You will find more pleaſantry in him than in all the *Roman* authors: but let it not betray you into the placing this, which is one of the leaſt things in the power of a great writer, in the rank of the moſt conſiderable. You will find him luxuriant, but it is often faultily; his fancy, of which he poſſeſſes more than all the writers in the world, frequently runs away with him, and, like thoſe painters who do not know where to take off the pencil, he ſpoils what was excellent by adding what is unneceſſary: If he has an eaſe in his verſification that charms, yet you will find in it a ſameneſs that tires; of all men he is the leaſt ſollicitous about variety in his numbers; nor is this the only thing he has omitted that was in his power; you will feel tenderneſs, and all the paſſions that go to form the complicated one as expreſſed by the name Love in his epiſtles: His *Metamorphoſes* will at once charm and aſtoniſh you by their variety and their ſplendor; and if in ſome things you have ſuppoſed him a trifler, you will find in his *Faſti* that he had great knowledge, and all the learning of his time. Imitate his eaſe, my dear Lord; ſtudy the manner in which he has ſo happily attacked the paſſions; but be upon your guard againſt his incorrectneſſes; for he has ſome of them; and above all things ſhews his redundant luxuriancy, that will make you think you have ſomething more to ſay when you have ſaid all.

I CANNOT agree with thoſe, my Lord, who who eſteem *Seneca* as a great Tragic writer: no man has a greater ſenſe of his perfections; but I cannot think his talents lay that way: You will

will ſee, that he affected to write theſe after the *Grecian* models, but you will ſee how he fails of his examples of imitation: he does not want a dignity of ſtyle or magnificence of expreſſion, and yet you cannot call it the true ſublime, beſide that to a writer for the ſtage there appears to me another requiſite greater than the ſublime, this is the pathetic, and of this he has nothing. I am apt to believe that *Seneca* did not intend his writings of this kind to be called fine Tragedies, but that he only uſed the form as convenient to convey morality, and thought the ſentiments he wiſhed to deliver would come with more warmth and force from the mouth of ſome great character than in the dry form of mere proverbs.

But, my Lord, if I hold *Seneca* cheaper than the reſt of the world uſually do as a writer of plays; I ſet him higher than all mortal men in the greater character of a true moraliſt: no man ever produced greater or juſter maxims; no man ſo many of them: he has a conciſeneſs which imprints them on the memory in a very ſingular manner; and it is an advantage to the world that one of the moſt uſeful writers in it is one of whom moſt will be remembered: There is alſo a ſmartneſs in his ſentences that at once gives them a ſingular grace, a ſpirit unknown before to leſſons of morality, and which aſſiſts in the good cauſe of imprinting them on the mind; but if I may be indulged in a ſingularity of opinion, I think he has often ſacrificed to this all the grace and elegance of language: you will not find in him, my Lord, that eaſy flow of words, that elegance of phraſe, nor that con-

ſummate purity of expreſſion which characteriſe the golden period of the *Latin* Tongue; not that I think he wanted power to have done this, but he neglected it for a greater advantage. He has not at all ſtudied propriety in the characters who ſpeak, and what one ſays might as well have come from the mouth of another; but come from what mouth it will it is good: In the ſame manner he has not conſidered what might be the moſt founding phraſe in his precepts, but ſtudious of the matter he has neglected the form and circumſtance.

You will find, my Lord, a ſtrange contraſt between the manner of *Seneca* and *Lucan*; the latter is as remarkably earneſt about his manner as the other is negligent of its graces; and he has, if in ſome places too violent, yet in many a beauty peculiar to himſelf, and of a conſummate luſtre: You will find in him, my Lord, an aſtoniſhing degree of genius, but you will wiſh in ſome places that he had corrected its ſallies: you will find a great maſter of the language; verſed in all the learning of his times, and ſecond to none in eloquence; his choice of words is happy, and his expreſſion bold and animated; there is a gravity and with it an authority in many parts of his poem that very happily authorize and adorn one another; he is, where that is neceſſary, ſtrong in a very great degree; at other times he is florid almoſt beyond imagination; his natural warmth and impetuoſity of temper ſtamp a peculiar and a very intereſting character on a great deal of the work: He is very fortunate in affecting and engaging the paſſions, and with this his deſcriptions are ſublime, his images of the

the things they repreſent, that he runs away with his reader, and you will ſeem preſent at and intereſted in an important and preſent tranſaction, rather than reading of one long paſt. He is irregular in a great degree, but a great many of his irregularities are beauties rather than faults. He is fond of ſhewing his proficiency in the learning of the times, and he ſometimes introduces this unwarrantably; but though he breaks the connexion of his Poem on this occaſion, he introduces elegancies innumerable, and while you wonder how things came there, you are not diſpleaſed at ſeeing them.

As the beauties of *Lucan*, my Lord, are thoſe of the trueſt genius, his faults are the faults of genius too. His very luxuriance of imagination becomes him, and his digreſſions, though low and ill-placed, are not tedious. His epiſodes are often out of place, and interrupt the action in an unpardonable manner, and he has diſputes and diſſertations on abſtruſe and unimportant points that teaze and perplex in a ſtrange manner. You will find him, on the whole, a very entertaining writer, and even when you condemn him you will not be quite diſpleaſed. You will ſee him depart from the true ſpirit and dignity of the Epic; but though he is not right in this he is pleaſing. Where he is ſhort he is happily ſententious; where diffuſe, elegant to a great degree; when he is pointed, as is often the caſe, there is a great deal of beauty and of ſpirit to atone for the impropriety of the manner. You will know, my Lord, in what manner you are to judge of Authors before you read *Lucan*, and on this conſideration you will read him without danger,

danger, and with great advantage; his faults will have their place in the rank of uſe, and that not as things to be avoided, but as objects of imitation. Many things which you will find wanting only propriety to make them valuable, will have all that value with you, which the circumſtances make them want in the Poem.

FROM *Lucan*, my Lord, you will be naturally led to *Statius*, an Author in ſome things like him, but upon the whole much unequal to him. He has as luxuriant an imagination as *Lucan*, but it is eaſy to ſee that he oftener checked it. You will find in his *Thebaid* innumerable beauties, but you will alſo ſee too many faults. You will ſee a fire and ſpirit equal to all that appears in the Poets of the greateſt name; but you will wiſh not only that it had been more limited, but that it had been better regulated: he has a great deal of natural dignity, but in carrying it too far he often ſpoils its luſtre. His language is often elegant to a very great degree, and though not univerſally, yet in a very great part, is appropriated in a very happy manner. If there be one fault predominant above the others in the *Thebaid*, it is that he is too florid; but you will ſee that in this the fault was in the impetuoſity of his fancy rather than in defect of judgment: his ſubject ran away with him, and he gave the reins to imagination. In his *Sylvæ* we ſee him with all this falſe glare, natural, elegant, and eaſy. His *Achilleid* there is no pronouncing any thing upon, for it was never retouched. You will find in many parts of his *Thebaid* a great deal of the true ſublime: in others he carries it into rant and bombaſt. In the *Achilleid* there is more of this

this in proportion than in the *Thebaid*; but we are not from thence to conclude that he grew worſe in this reſpect as he continued his application: had he lived to finiſh, he would alſo have corrected that Poem; and in juſtice to his memory we ought to believe thoſe paſſages which are leaſt to be defended would not have been ſuffered to ſtand in it.

LONGINUS has obſerved, that thoſe who have been moſt eminent in the ſublime, have been of all men the moſt ſubject to ſudden falls, and you will nowhere ſee this ſo ſtrongly exemplified, my Lord, as in *Statius*. As his fault was the ſtretching the ſublime too far, and flying to it too often, he has of all men the oftener fallen, and he has fell the loweſt. *Virgil* was the great pattern that he ſet before him. He tells us himſelf that he looked on his works with veneration. In many parts he is very like his model, but he would doubtleſs have been much better had he not followed him ſo cloſely; he has cramped his own imagination by it in ſome places, and in others, where he gave it leave to ſwell, the falſe greatneſs appears more faulty from the diſproportion to the reſt. I know, my Lord, your judgment will be offended at the exaggerated images which he gives of every thing, you will be diſpleaſed with his phraſe, which is often too pompous for his meaning, but you will be pleaſed with a great deal of his true ſpirit and magnificence.

FOR the ſame reaſon which induced me to place *Statius* after *Lucan*, I put *Claudian* after *Statius*. *Claudian*, my Lord, has all the glori-

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ous faults of *Statius* in as much a higher degree as that in which *Statius* poſſeſſed them beyond *Lucan*. He is extravagant in his imagination more than all men, and he is florid and ſuperb in his expreſſion more than them all. You will be greatly offended with this, my Lord, where it is, as in too many places it is, quite diſproportioned to the matter, but where he has thought to ſupport it you will admire him. No man ever poſſeſſed more of the true poetic genius than *Claudian*, few men of genius have poſſeſſed ſo little judgment. His flights are of the extravagant kind, but they are always beautiful. He has a boldneſs in the uſe of figures that ſurpriſes you, but its foundation almoſt always is in truth, tho' he ſtretches too far in the execution. You will find in him though all the pomp yet little of the affectation of *Statius*. He ſwells as often without cauſe; but you will ſee that this is nature, not, as in the other, art and labour: and you, my Lord, I know will find it much eaſier to excuſe what was only a ſlip in the heat of fancy, than one that was laboured as an excellence. His greateſt enemies have allowed him wit. I think no Poet poſſeſſes a happier vein of it. He is full of elegancies, but they are diſgraced by a multitude of unequal paſſages. His verſe you will, I know, my Lord, ſay wants variety, but you will be charmed with its ſmoothneſs and its harmony; in this he reſembles *Ovid*, in his flights he is moſt like *Statius*. You will not be pleaſed with his panegyrics; but, my Lord, to form your character of him, read his Rape of *Proſerpine*. Authors are generally fondeſt of their worſt pieces; but in this *Claudian*, deficient as he was in it in many reſpects, ſhewed a conſummate

mate judgment; he valued himself most upon it, and it is worth all his works.

GIVE me leave, my dear Lord, to mention *Silius Italicus*, though not with any very profound veneration, yet with a degree of respect somewhat superior to that which the severity of the critics allow him. You will find him, my Lord, in many places truly magnificent in his thought as well as his expression: oftener indeed in the first than in the latter. It is his language that oftenest fails him: and you will not wonder therefore, my Lord, that those who judge by the superficies have condemned him more than they ought. He shews that he was possessed of all the learning of his time, and he displays no little knowledge of the human heart. Many of his characters are proper, some of them are great: in some he wants both these qualities. If I may judge, *Silius Italicus*, had he written when he was younger, would have made a much greater figure. His subject is the second *Punic* war, his model was the *Æneid*. He has shewn great judgment in the plan and conduct of his work, but there wants power for the execution. All is laboured, and he seems to have very well known how to apply his labour: but he has written like an old man. Had we seen only the *Odyssey*, who would have supposed *Homer* capable of writing the *Iliad*? Had we read only the *Paradise regain'd*, would any one have thought *Milton* equal to the other Poem? The fire of Poetry and of Life, the *Promethean* heat, which there is no rekindling, was faded in the old man when he wrote this Poem, nor was his a time of life at which to attempt such a work as an Epic Poem.

VIRGIL

VIRGIL was not leſs eminently the model of *Valerius Flaccus* than of *Statius*; nor has that Author imitated him more happily. I cannot approve him for the choice of a ſubject. You will have read the *Argonautics* of *Appollonius Rhodius* before you look into him, and conſequently the ſubject will be very familiar to you. *Valerius Flaccus* has almoſt tranſlated the *Greek* Author: in ſome places he has abſolutely done ſo, but he had a genius much ſuperior to the *Greek*, and wherever he has done it the Poem is infinitely mended. You will agree with me, my Lord, that it is pity ſuch a genius did not ſtrike out a plan of his own, inſtead of forming himſelf upon that of an inferior.

You will find in him, my Lord, a great deal of true ſpirit, and with it a ſound judgment. He is copious in his invention, elegant and yet bold in his fancy, and correct in his manner. There is a great deal of loftineſs in his expreſſion, and it is always in the proper places; and you will the more join with me, my Lord, in wiſhing he had laid a better foundation, when you perceive, as you will throughout, that wherever he departs from his original, he is better than when he pays regard to it, and the better the more ſcope he gives to his own fancy.

THERE is a ruggedneſs in this Author's verſe, which will diſguſt you at firſt, but perſevere, and you will ſoon diſregard it. You will wonder, by the harmony of ſome of his numbers, that he ſhould leave the reſt ſo unequal to them, but had he lived he would have obviated

ated the objection. *Flaccus* is one of those Poets whom death prevented from finishing, and consequently from revising, his compositions.

AUSONIUS, my dear Lord, is another of the Poets who will give you a great deal of pleasure, though you cannot place him in the highest form. His imagination is fine, his invention copious, his fancy inexhaustible. He is strong rather than elegant in his language, and his wit is rather keen than delicate: he has a great deal of it, my Lord, and much is so proper that it will please you. I have told you, what are the beauties of *Ausonius*, I must not be silent as to his faults. You will not find his language graceful, but that is the least of his defects; he is greatly unequal to himself in some of his performances, and this is to be attributed to a fault the least pardonable of all others, neglect. You will see him in some pieces excellent to a degree of equality with many of more sounding name, in others as mean as the lowest of any name at all. The critics have supposed this owing to some of them being on subjects which he liked better than those of the others; but this is not the case: for we frequently see the beginning and end of the same piece as different as if the work of two Authors. He seems often to have been fond of a thing when he first took it up, and then to have taken some pains about it, and after this to have grown tired of it, and neglected it toward the end.

AUSONIUS is not only inelegant in his language, but indecent in many of his thoughts; several of his Epigrams are obscene and shameful,

and

and through many other of his pieces there is an unpardonable vein of lasciviousness. But of all the rest of his works his *Cento Nuptialis* is the most abominable. You would not imagine it easy, my dear Lord, to make *Virgil* obscene, but this industrious Author has done it. His shameful piece of this title is composed of half verses from several parts of *Virgil*, and it is as filthy as you could conceive the imagination of man could make an original.

IF I have detained you a little, my Lord, on the subject of three Poets among the *Romans* not equal to the generality of the rest, I have yet three others to mention, who deserve to be ranked with the very greatest, *Persius*, *Juvenal*, and *Martial*, and with these I shall close this long course of *Observations*. Had *Persius* lived, six Satires would not have been all that we should have had of his. He died a youth under thirty, and by what he has produced at so early a period, we may form a judgment of what he would have done with such a genius, ripened by more time, and perfected by a fuller experience. You will find, my Lord, that his Fellow-classics speak of him with an uncommon degree of respect, and you will acknowledge that a tribunal from which there is no appeal. He has, in every part, displayed all the effects of genius, and in many he has found means of employing a stock of knowledge which, by the part that we see of it, could not, in the whole, comprehend less than all that was known in the times. He has great dignity, and with it great propriety of sentiment, and his language is what becomes such thoughts, noble without being pompous,

pompous, and at once elegant and ſtrong. I have mentioned *Horace* with great reſpect as a ſatyriſt, but *Perſius*, though a ſatyriſt alſo, is of another turn. He is vaſtly more ſevere. *Horace* laughs and rallies, *Perſius* wounds and inſults. This is leſs pleaſing, but it is ſtronger than the other. If you are out of humour with him for what has a face of ill-nature, you will diſcover, as you go on, that is rather the ſeverity of his judgment than of his temper, and when you ſee that integrity of heart, and warmth of expreſſion with which he recommends virtue, you will know that his ſeverity againſt vice, is the child of this love to what is good. You will reverence him, you will love him for his honeſty and that plain ſincerity of heart with which he always expreſſes himſelf on theſe occaſions, will appear to you the right garb of truth, and far from offending will charm you. You will be out of humour with *Auſonius* for his flattering the vices of a Court, and debaſing the character of his Poems by lewdneſs and obſcenity, but you will have the higheſt reſpect for *Perſius*, when you ſee that warmth with which he oppoſes this, and you will the more honour him for it when you recollect that he wrote in the days of *Nero*. I will not pretend, my Lord, to rank *Perſius* at all with the reſt, even with the loweſt of the *Roman* Poets, in regard to verſification. I muſt confeſs that with all my partiality to him I think him the worſt of them all. It is not only his meaſure that muſt be given up on this occaſion, even the purity of his phraſe cannot be always ſupported, for he now-and-then, in the midſt of the nobleſt turn of expreſſion, uſes a word that cannot be defended.

I AM

I AM upon the faults of *Perſius*, I wiſh there were no more of them. Him whom I ſo much reverence as a man I would fain defend as a Poet, but I abjure partiality. He is often happy, very happy in his figures, but, my Lord, he is not always juſt, he is in ſome too bold for diſcretion. If you obſerve that with all this he is alſo laboured ly ſhort in many places, you will not wonder, that he has been called obſcure. He will be leſs ſo to you, my Lord, than to many, but you will ſometimes condemn him; but while you condemn him bear with him: it will ſometimes coſt you pains to underſtand him, but he is worth the pains: his ſenſe is worth the ſearch. His virtue is a point in which he excels all the reſt of the ſatyriſts, and to me his eminence in this compenſates for all, and would compenſate for more than all his faults.

MARTIAL will pleaſe you, my dear Lord, by the vivacity of his turn, and the variety of his matter: he has more ſpirit than moſt writers, more variety in the compaſs than all: but while you approve you will not fail to cenſure him. There is nothing ſo nice as Epigram, no ſpecies of Poetry in which it is ſo difficult to ſucceed, and none in which the palm is ſo precarious. Fancy determines of this kind of writing more than judgment; and it is not always he who has written beſt that has the moſt applauſe, a luckineſs of expreſſion in an Epigram ſhall cover a thouſand faults, and outweigh all the beauties in the world. The pleaſantry of *Martial*'s turn qualified him very happily for the Epigram, and his peculiar ſmartneſs could not but determine him

him to continue in it. He is full of wit in many of them, and these are allowed their praise by all; in others it is not wit but humour, and these have been disputed. Every man judges of humour not by rules, but by imagination, and consequently it pleases or it disgusts, according to the turn of him who determines of it. Some shall call that excellent which others shall condemn beyond all reprieve by the term *low*: and what charms one ear shall nauseate another: it is hence that you will find some of the critics, my Lord, extolling *Martial* to the clouds, others condemning and despising him. To some he appears the most delicate master of humour who ever wrote, to others a mere buffoon. You, I know, will enter into the spirit of the Author: and you will judge more favourably of him than those who only skim the surface, but you will not approve him in all. While others say that many of his Epigrams want grace, you will perceive that some of them want morality. And it will give you the highest offence, that under the cloak of rallying crimes, he often teaches them. His style is in all parts pure, and in many elegant: you will find something in his spirit and vigour of thought worthy imitation, and though of the number of the greatest decorations to speech, these, are the easiest copied. I know he will suffer with you, my Lord, for the indelicacy of some of his Epigrams, and the absolute obscenity of others; but you are a candid judge, while you condemn him in these you will allow him all the praise he deserves, a that is a great deal in the others.]

PERMIT

PERMIT me, my dear Lord, to ſay a few words on the excellencies of *Juvenal*, and I ſhall relieve you from this long attention. I lamented the ſmall number of *Perſius*'s Satires: this Author has left us near three times as many, and he has hardly left us room to wiſh for more. With all their excellencies we have no deſire to ſee them continued, for he has cloſed the ſcene with the laſt Satire, and in the whole ſeries has given a compleat moral ſyſtem. It is amazing that ſo fertile a ſubject as the vices of mankind ſhould ever be exhauſted; but the accurate, the diſcerning *Juvenal* has done it. He lived in a time of the moſt abandoned cuſtoms: vice was almoſt as univerſal, almoſt as avowed as now; yet he has dared to laſh it with a noble ſeverity in every ſhape it wore, and never failed to paint it too deteſtable for choice, authoriſed by any thing leſs than cuſtom.

YOU will admire the genius of this Poet, my Lord, and you will revere his morals. You will be charmed with the brightneſs of his head; but you will be raviſhed with the goodneſs of his heart. His ſentiments are nobly ſevere, and greatly delivered. He is in many places ſententious and weighty; in others more diffuſed, and with that more ſevere. He is beyond all men free and open in his attacks upon the vices of the age, for he ſeldom condeſcends to meddle with its follies, and he was maſter of an expreſſion equal to his dignity of thought. His language is always ſmooth and flowing, but it is alſo every where appropriated. Where it may be eaſy it is moſt ſoft, where the ſentiments requires

quires it, with its ſmoothneſs it has a ſtrength and vigour quite unparalleled.

YOU will find, my Lord, that *Juvenal* in his utmoſt ſeverity has an air of politeneſs. He is the Gentleman with the Satyriſt, and however ſtrong his raillery, he never loſes ſight of good manners. No man ever equalled him in the art of managing a ſubject to the beſt advantage, and for extent of knowledge and copiouſneſs of invention, he has had no rival. You will remember *Horace*, my Lord, while you are reading *Juvenal*; but the recollection will not be to this Author's diſadvantage: they have in ſome of their Satires fallen on the ſame ſubjects, but *Juvenal* will command the moſt exalted applauſe. *Horace* is pleaſant, *Juvenal* ſevere. The one only laughs at vice, the other cruſhes it under his feet.

IF *Juvenal* has a fault, my Lord, it is redundancy, but who ever poſſeſſed ſuch a genius, and could perfectly command it? His language is elegant, and when the ſubject will bear it out, lofty; his verſe harmonicus, and his ſentiment, with all its greatneſs, generally has a familiarity that infinitely recommends it. You will read all the *Roman* Satyriſts, my Lord, with advantage, with great advantage, but *Juvenal* with the greateſt.

THESE are the immortalized of antiquity, and theſe the paths by which they reached that immortality. Purſue the ſame ſteps, my Lord, and the ſame end will follow. You have an advantage which they wanted,

ſuch a ſeries of examples; and I know nothing they poſſeſſed which is wanting in you. There is no height of fame to which I do not expect to ſee you riſe, my Lord, and it will be a glorious thought that I, perhaps, have contributed ſomething, however little, towards it.

I am,

My LORD,

With the greateſt reſpect and gratitude,

Your LORDSHIP's

Very obedient Servant.

* * * *

FINIS.

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REMARKS

ON THE

ITALIAN LANGUAGE

AND

WRITERS.

IN A

LETTER

FROM

M. JOSEPH BARETTI

TO AN

ENGLISH Gentleman at TURIN,

Written in the Year 1751.

LONDON:

Printed in the Year MDCCLIII.

REMARKS

ON THE

ITALIAN LANGUAGE

AND

WRITERS.

THE *Italian* tongue, which took its riſe a little before *Dante* *, was greatly improved during his time and that of *Boccacio*, who lived towards the end of the thirteenth century; at which period it arrived at perfection. It continued ſo near two centuries, then decayed, and in the laſt century became corrupted: it was even on the point of being loſt; and, though towards the end of the laſt age, and the beginning of the preſent, it recovered a little, yet its decline is ſtill viſible, and its total extinction, perhaps not very diſtant. Some indeed think it is as pure at preſent as

* In the twelfth century.

ever: but I am firmly perſuaded of the contrary, and will not heſitate to aſſert, that there are not, at this day, twenty perſons in all *Italy* who underſtand it thoroughly, and can write it correctly.

LET us firſt conſider our earlieſt Writers in proſe and verſe, and afterwards proceed to the moderns.

AMONG the ancient proſe Writers *Boccacio* carried the *Italian* to a height which, I imagine, can ſcarce be ſurpaſſed. This Writer I would recommend, before all others, notwithſtanding the criticiſms of ſome ignorant moderns, who think his phraſes too far-fetched, and tell us it is no longer cuſtomary to place the verb at the end of the ſentence. Such as talk in this manner evidently know nothing of the matter. *Boccacio* abounds with beautiful, lively, and natural expreſſions; and the diſpoſition of his periods is admirable. He paints the human paſſions, and whatever comes in his way, with a grace and ſtrength to which no other *Italian* proſe writer can pretend. I own that ſome of his terms are not now to be uſed: but they are ſo few, that when you have made a little progreſs in our language, you will readily avoid them in writing without being told of them. Of *Boccacio*'s works, however, you ought only to ſtudy the *Decameron*, and the *Laberinto d'Amore*. His other pieces are not written with the ſame eaſe or propriety of language, though in all his works there are ſome excellent things with regard to ſtyle.

NEXT to *Boccacio* comes *La Caſa*, who, I think, lived about two centuries after him. The *Galateo*, and ſome of his orations, are written with wonderful perſpicuity and elegance: and his *Offici communi* are by no means deſpicable.

IN the novels and proſe pieces of *Firenzuola* there is much ſweetneſs and grace. We have not any Author that has equalled his agreeable and beautiful manner: nor is there any *Tuſcan* Writer that comes up to his charms of expreſſion, except it be *Benvenuto Celleni* in his own life, which is written with inimitable elegance, and much natural ſimplicity. Some other pieces of *Celleni* are very good, and deſerve to be read more than once.

CARDINAL *Bembo*, and *Sperone Speroni* have alſo wrote well in proſe, and want not their beauties; but, like *Caſtiglione* in his *Courtier*, they are heavy, and diſguſt the reader by a certain air of pedantry, which runs through their works.

THE Letters of *Annibal Caro*, and ſome of his proſe ſatires againſt *Caſtelvetro*, are eaſy and perſpicuous; and whoever would write familiarly will not find a better model among the *Tuſcans*.

WE have many other good Writers in proſe; ſuch as *Bernardo Taſſo*, *Il Caſca le Varchi*, *Alberto Lollio*, the two *Giraldi*, *Remigio*, *Fiorentino*, and others. But there would be no end of naming them all. I ſhall only add, that very

few, or rather none of them, come up to the perfection of those I have just mentioned. The two *Villani*, *Machiavel*, *Passavanti*, and *Guicciardini*, are the best.

PET. ARETIN, so famous for his obscenity and insolence, was as ignorant of his own tongue, as of good manners.

WE have also a very great number of old Comedies, wrote with true purity of style: but it would be too tedious to mention them particularly. When you have made yourself master of the Writers I have named, you will be able to form a judgment of them yourself. Let us proceed to the Poets.

OF all our Poetic Writers *Dante* of *Alighieri* is, in my opinion, the greatest. The plot of what he was pleased to call a Comedy, is the grandest that ever entered the thoughts of man. His language is lofty, sublime, and haughty, if I may use that term. Whenever I have occasion to mention *Dante*, I cannot forbear calling him that sprite, or that seraph *Dante*. Never, surely, was a man endued with so great a genius, and such a fruitful invention: this appears chiefly in the divine Poem I am speaking of; and I am often surprised that the *Italians* should presume to write Epic Poems after *Dante*, whose work ought to have struck the greatest of them with astonishment. However, as we have other Epic Poems, it is plain that *Italy* is a Country fertile in the production of extraordinary geniuses, writers of great fire, who were not discouraged, though, to speak in the language of the Poets,

they

they ſaw the firſt places on *Parnaſſus* already occupied, but boldly attempted to ſtrike out a path to the ſummit of the mount.

LUIGGI PULCI, Author of a Poem intitled *Morgant the elder*, is one of thoſe uncommon geniuſes, who has ſeated himſelf neareſt to *Dante* on *Parnaſſus*. The fluency of *Pulci*'s verſe, the multiplicity of his images, the variety of his meaſures, and of his ſentiments, ſometimes lofty and noble, at other times ſimple and agreeable, have placed him above all praiſe. The odd character of his *Margutti*, the *Tent of Luciana*, the *Battle of Roncevaux*, with the *Death of Roland*, are painted ſo livelily, that I am tranſported while I read them. In ſeveral places, however, he is very careleſs in the choice of his phraſes, which are often coarſe and obſcure, though leſs ſo than *Dante*, who is ſometimes very clowniſh, and even unintelligible, after all the pains of his commentators.

THE *Orlando inamorato* of *Boiardo*, which has been new-moulded and burleſqued by the inimitable *Berni*, is traveſtied in ſuch a pure ſtyle, that we have no Poet that writes more agreeably, or better *Italian*. It is, in fact, my favourite Poem. *Berni* may be properly called the eldeſt ſon of nature. The admirable harmony and beauty of his verſification, his ſtyle always equal, always charming, render him much ſuperior, in theſe reſpects, to all others. The beginnings of his Cantos, which are chiefly moral, are *Berni* all over; and greatly excel thoſe of *Ariôſto*, whatever ſome may tell us.

AFTER these comes another Epic Poet, a very spirit for imagining things great and uncommon, it is, the *Arioſto* juſt mentioned. If this Poet's genius could have ſubmitted to rules, and he had poſſeſſed a more perfect knowledge of the *Italian*, or at leaſt if he had been better acquainted with the purity of the language, he would have been truly an original. The variety of his characters, the frequency of his compariſons, his moſt lively and natural deſcriptions, make me conſider him as a miraculous Poet: I can think of no other epithet for him ſo proper. *Rowland grown mad*, and particularly the Canto where he turns raving through a furious jealouſy, is the fineſt, and, at the ſame time the boldeſt thing that ever entered the imagination of a Poet. But if *Arioſto* has many admirable and original beauties, he has alſo ſeveral conſiderable blemiſhes. I ſhall enter into no detail of them, but content myſelf with mentioning one only, namely, his frequent and tedious commendation of his fooliſh maſter, who, in return for his divine work, aſked him that remarkable ſilly queſtion, Where he met with ſo many extravagancies? So many, and ſo often repeated, praiſes of the houſe of *Eſte*, his patrons, are infinitely diſtaſteful and irkſome to a reader. Beſide the *Orlando Furioſo*, *Arioſto* has written ſome comedies, ſatires, and other rhimes: but it is to that Poem alone he owes his fame both in *Italy* and abroad.

TORQUATO TASSO, held in higher eſteem by learned men in foreign countries, than by thoſe of his own, was a man of a methodical genius, and copied the *Greeks* and *Romans* very cloſe.

close. He wrote in the manner, in which he supposed *Virgil* would have written, had he lived in his time. His *Jerusalem delivered*, is the last of our Poems that merits any high commendation: for no good Epic Poet has appeared since *Tasso*. The characters in his *Jerusalem*, the sentiments, and the descriptions, are done with great force and propriety; and the admirers of *Homer* and *Virgil* highly commend the admirable unity of his fable, which has recommended his Poem to all the polite nations of *Europe*. I do not think him, however, so much an original as the other Epic Poets I have named, who, though they abound less in beauties in the taste of those of *Homer*, possess many other original ones peculiar to themselves, so truly original, that I sincerely think they are not inferior, but to even excel the greatest of the *Greek* and *Latin* Poets. But of this every one will judge according to his own taste. I return to *Tasso*. His style is not polite, nor harmonious; his numbers want variety, and his thoughts and phrases are too studied and far-fetched; so that whoever would attain the purity of the *Italian* tongue will not find it in his works.

We have two other Epic Poets, who have acquired a great name in *Italy*. One is *Tassoni*, who wrote the *Secchia rapita*, and the other *Lippi*, Author of the *Malmantile*. The *Secchia rapita* is not well wrote, and though *Tassoni* carried it very high, he was not master of good *Italian*, and was a bad versifier. The *Malmantile* is a heavy *Florentine* composition, a mass of *quodlibets*, the frequent use of which, in any composition, discovers too much affectation. However, several

veral useful things, with regard to style, may be learned from this Poem, and the voluminous remarks on it by three *Florentines*.

MANY other *Italians* have written Epic Poems: the least known are *Il Girone* by *Allamanni*, the *Amadigi* of *Bernardo Tasso*, the *Gierusalemme riacquistato* of *Bracciolini*, *Il Boemondo*, and *La Granata*, by two Poets whose names I don't remember: but all of them, and several others, scarce deserve to be read; for notwithstanding what some, who pass for men of learning, may assume to tell us, they are very heavy compositions.

I HAD almost forgot to mention to you another Poem, commended by many *Italians*, and by some foreigners, the *Italia liberata* of *Trissino*. It must be owned this Poem is not ill wrote: but I could never bear to read three Cantos of it. The blank verse which the author has made use of, is the heaviest thing in the world. For the same reason I never had the patience to read to the end of *Tasso*'s *Work*, nor to finish the translation of the *Æneid* in blank verse by *Annibal Caro*, though it excels the *Italia liberata* and the *Sette giornate*, both in language and versification.

FROM these reflexions on the Epic Poets, you may conceive what a contemptible performance *Voltaire*'s *Essay sur la Poesie Epique* must be, in which he pretends to pass sentence on our Epic Poets, without having the least knowledge of our best Writers, and without even a superficial acquaintance with our language: this wretched judge sets up himself for an Epic Poet; but,

but, compared with *Dante*, and *Pulci*, and several others, he is not worthy to carry their books after them. His *Henriade* is such a poor performance, that it would be the greatest affront to our Epic Writers to name that wretched *French* Poem with their pieces. But it is time to have done with the Epic Poets: let us proceed to those of a different kind.

ONE that I like best is the young *Buonarotti* in his *Zanica*, a rural Comedy, an original in its kind, and containing more poetical beauties, perhaps, than any thing *Italy* has produced: but it requires a perfect knowledge of our language to understand it, notwithstanding the numerous notes of *Salvini*. We have no dramatic piece, whether Tragedy or Comedy, more agreeable to read than the delightful *Zanica*.

I HAVE already said, that there are above a thousand Comedies in *Italian*. Several of the old ones are very good, or rather they are full of beauties. But I could never relish them because they are not written in rhime: my reasons for this I have given in the Preface to my translation of *Corneille*. I shall not say much of our Tragedies, for, to tell you a secret, I could never read one with pleasure, for the same reason, the want of rhime, excepting only the *Electra* of Count *Gaspard Gozzi*, a *Venetian*. This Writer engaged me to read him, though he writes in blank verse, by the beauty of his language, and the artful disposition and variety of his numbers.

YOU will hear much commended in *Italy* the Marquis *Maffei*'s Tragedies acted at the *Italian* Theatre

Theatre, and his *Merope*; the Tragedies of *Gravina*, and those of *Saito*; the *Ulysses* of *Lazzarini*; and those of *Martelli*, which are wretchedly translated into *French* Verse, and the Abbé *Conti*, with some others not worth mentioning. All these are very dull to read, and still worse to hear from the stage.

I AM sensible, that was I to talk in this manner to the modern *Italians*, much more was I to write so freely. they would be ready to dispatch me to the other world, or at least regard me as a perfect madman. But I speak to a stranger whom I would not deceive: and when you become acquainted with our language, you will judge whether I am in the wrong.

I WOULD not, however, conceal from you, that our ancient Poets have written several Comedies in octaves and triolets, which are not disagreeable, as far as I can judge by some fragments that I have seen. But these Comedies are so scarce, especially those of *Rozzi de Sienne*, which have not been reprinted these two hundred years, that it would be in vain to search for them, or to hope to purchase them for money.

SOME good judges, both *Italians* and Foreigners, have liked several of our Pastoral Tragi-Comedies, such as *Tasso*'s *Aminta*, *Guarini*'s *Pastor Fido*, and the *Phillis de Sciro* by *Buonarelli*; to which may be added the *Alceo* of *l'Ungaro*. But, excepting the *Aminta*, which is diverting enough, the rest are so poor, they are scarcely looked into; and have more panegyrists than readers, particularly the *Pastor Fido*, which

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is a tedious collection of love ſentences, full of phraſes that belong rather to *Lombardy* and the *Romagna*, than to *Tuſcany*. The *Phillis de Sciro*, and the *Alcea*, are perhaps in every reſpect worſe than the *Paſtor Fido*.

METASTASIA, who is now alive, has acquired a name by writing Dramatic pieces ſet to muſic. This writer is at little pains to draw his characters as they are repreſented in hiſtory; his language is intermixed with *Roman* phraſes, and his pieces, in general, filled with incidents very diſtant from probability: yet, notwithſtanding theſe three great defects, he is read and heard with pleaſure and applauſe, both with muſic and without, on account of the harmonious flow of his verſe, and his many natural and ſublime thoughts. His other rhimes, which are not ſet to muſic, ſuch as his ſonnets, octaves, chapters, and his poems in blank verſe, cannot be read without diſtaſte, and ſeem not to be the productions of that great man.

APOSTOLO ZENO, the predeceſſor of *Metaſtaſio* at the imperial theatre, publiſhed ſome volumes of tragedies ſet to muſic, which in a very ſhort time ſunk into oblivion, for want of that agreeable fire which animates the true poet. This always has been, and always will be the fate of mediocrity in poetry, notwithſtanding the avarice of publiſhers and the ignorance of readers.

AFTER the Epic and Tragic Poets come the Lyric; of whom ſeveral of *Italy* are carried by many perſons as high as the third century. To ſpeak

ſpeak ingenuouſly, the poet who writes only Lyric, ſeems to me to have very little ſenſe. The compoſing a Sonnet or Cantata, I regard as nothing compared with an Epic Poem, a Tragedy, or a Comedy. For this reaſon, I am always aſtoniſhed at the felicity of *Petrarca*, whoſe Sonnets and Cantatas are much oftener mentioned in converſation and writing, than the performances of our greateſt Epic Poets. There is certainly as much difference between the genius of *Dante* and of *Petrarca*, as between the ſize of an elephant and a fly. Yet the greateſt part of thoſe we call poets, or who have a taſte for poetry, read *Petrarca*, write of him, praiſe and imitate him, whilſt few look into *Dante*, *Pulci*, or *Berni*. This proceeds from the want of genius in moſt men, who therefore can have no taſte or deſire for things that ſurpaſs their own imagination; and hence the trifles and little thoughts of *Petrarca* are better ſuited to the narrow capacities of the generality of readers, than the ſublime ſentiments of *Dante* and the other Epic Poets, which require an extenſive mind to comprehend. I do not know whether I have expreſſed myſelf clearly; but this ſhall be all. *Petrarca*, who has hitherto held the firſt rank among our Lyric Poets, wrote ſome Cantatas very beautiful in their kind, but few of his ſonnets pleaſe me throughout. And as to his *Triomphes*, excepting a few ſcattered triplets, they are extremely bad, and heavy to read. His language, however, is very pure and good, if we except ſome obſolete words which he uſe.

ALMOST all our writers of the fifteenth century, as we call them, have imitated *Petrarca*: and

and if I find the original deficient in invention, you will eaſily judge in what eſteem I hold the copyiſts.

LA CASA and *Angelo de Conſtanzo*, who have wrote ſome few Lyric verſes, are not at all Petrarchiſts, and, like the generality of the Lyric Poets, have ſome little things that are very agreeable; but when poetry has only the agreeable, and nothing of the great and ſublime, it becomes to me intolerable. I repeat it again: I find no great nor laſting pleaſure, but in an Epic Poem, a good Tragedy or Comedy.

AMONG the Lyric Poems which have given me ſome pleaſure, I place in the firſt rank thoſe of our ancient Poets, ſuch as *Dante* the Epic writer; the other *Dante da Maiaro*, *Cino da Piſtoia*, in ſhort, all I have met with of that age: for though their language is vulgar, their ſentiments are more noble, and both in their thoughts and their expreſſions they have followed nature more cloſely than their ſucceſſors. *Frederic Seghezzi* has collected the Lyrics of twelve of theſe, and printed them within theſe two years at *Venice*.

TOWARDS the end of the laſt century four other Lyric Poets appeared, who made ſome noiſe in *Italy*. One was *Chiabrera*, who, I have been told, undertook to imitate *Pindar*; I have met with ſome who pretended he ſurpaſſed him. *Pindar*, if this be true, muſt be a very indifferent poet. If we except ſome poems of *Chiabrera* in blank verſe, not ill done, the reſt will hardly bear to be twice read. He wrote a Poem on the

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city of *Florence* in ſtanzas of eight lines, which was as ſoon forgot as printed.

THE ſecond is *Filicaia*, who has here and there ſome good things; but, altogether, is but little to be eſteemed.

THE third is *Alexander Guidi*, who endeavouring to write in the *Hebrew* taſte, and the eaſtern ſtyle, got upon his ſtilts and mounted to the clouds: yet for all the praiſes beſtowed on him without meaſure, right or wrong, by his great friend the famous *Gravina*, this moſt ſublime *Guidi* is as little known and as ſeldom named among the poets, as the Tragedies and verſes of his panegyriſt.

THE fourth and laſt is *Merozini*, a moſt wretched verſifier, who naufeates me as often as he comes in my way.

WE have many other poets who have written on different ſubjects; ſuch as *Sannazzaro*, who, beſides his Lyric verſes much in the manner of *Petrarca*, and ſome cantos in *Dante*'s, wrote the famous *Arcadia*. The eclogues contain many excellent things: but the conſtraint under which he laid himſelf to rhime in that kind of meaſure the *Italians* call *ſtruccioli*, obliged him to make uſe of many curtailed *Latin* words; which diſpleaſe me infinitely.

THERE are ſeveral other poets I like much, principally thoſe who wrote, as we commonly ſay, *alla Berneſca*, that is, in *Berni*'s manner; whoſe burleſque cantos and ſonnets are extremely agreeable,

agreeable, and in the pureſt *Italian*; particularly his *Roland* new-moulded, with which I am much delighted.

LASCA, *Caſa*, *Firenzuola*, *Ruſpoli*, and many others, have imitated him more or leſs; and particularly *Jeronimo Leopard*; and they have all more or leſs of beauty and grace.

BURCHIELLO, a barber of *Florence*, wrote prior to all theſe, in the burleſque taſte; and his poems, I mean ſuch as are intelligible, for moſt of them are not, pleaſe me ſtill more than even thoſe of *Berni*, on account of a certain energy of expreſſion peculiar to himſelf, and rarely to be found in the ſonnets and cantos of *Berni*, in all other reſpects ſo exquiſite.

BELLINZONI, who alſo wrote burleſque before *Berni*, has many very good things, that deſerve to be read again and again: but his ſonnets are ſo ſcarce, 'tis a hard matter to meet with them.

But above all who have written burleſque, Count *Gozzi*, whom I mentioned above, delights me moſt. If this nobleman ever prints his compoſitions in proſe and verſe, many of which I have read in manuſcript, they will gain him a very high reputation. He is the only modern poet with whom I am intirely ſatisfied, both when he writes ſerious and burleſque. I am infinitely grieved that he does not write always in verſe: his great and extenſive genius would produce many excellent things in the pureſt ſtyle.

ONE

ONE *Vittore Vittori*, a phyſician of *Mantua*, printed a volume of burleſque verſes a few years ago at *Milan*, which I think very good; and when I was lately at *Mantua*, in my return from *Venice*, he told me he intended to reprint them with ſome additions. I am impatient till it be done, for he is a man of a vaſt invention, capable, like *Gozzi*, of greater things than chapters and ſongs. There is much eaſe in his expreſſion and rhimes, and great beauty in his ſentiments and diction: but his too great practice as a phyſician hinders him from writing much, and from reviſing what he has wrote.

WHILST I am ſpeaking of our Poets now alive, it comes into my head to mention to you ſome of thoſe on whom I ſet the greateſt value.

THE Abbé *Jerome Tagliazucchi*, of *Modena*, honorary profeſſor of the *Greek* tongue, of eloquence, and *Italian* poetry in our univerſity of *Turin*, and author of a philoſophical treatiſe on the manner of inſtructing youth in polite literature, has printed a collection of poems, which are very good in their different kinds.

DOMINIQUE BALESTRIERI, and *Charles Antoine Tanzi*, both of the *Milaneſe*, are well acquainted with the *Berniſean* taſte; but they write little.

JOHN CHARLES PASSERONI, a clergyman of *Nice* in *Provence*, writes the ſerious in *Petrarca*'s manner, and burleſque much in *Berni*'s taſte; the latter with admirable eaſe. He has

has begun an entertaining burleſque poem, intitled, *The life of Cicero*, which will be a moſt agreeable thing, if he lives to finiſh it, and an original in its kind. But his *Tuſcan* ſtyle wants a little correction.

ALL the poets of the ſchool of *Bologna* are followers of *Petrarca*, and conſequently copyiſts: the beſt is *John Peter Zanotti*, who beſides ſeveral elegant pieces in proſe, has printed a collection of ſongs, two Tragedies in blank verſe, and a volume of agreeable pieces, that ſeem rather the production of a *Lombard* than a native of *Tuſcany*.

THERE is one *Leonard Marcelletto* at *Venice*, who, if he would ſet himſelf to write, would be little inferior to *Gozzi*.

LOUISA BERGALLI, the wife of this Count *Gozzi*, excels in different manners of writing. In ſome amorous rhimes addreſſed to her huſband, there is ſo much eaſe and ſimplicity, they muſt pleaſe every one.

I MUST own I have met with no poet in any city of *Italy*, who better underſtands the adapting verſe to muſic, than ſome *Venetians*; but they are few and young; I hope they will one day acquire a name by ſome pieces of poetry: theſe are *Gionni Marſilio*, *Adamanta Martinelli*, and *Giorgio Breuner*. I am perſuaded they will in time diſtinguiſh themſelves by their poetic writings.

Abbé

Abbé *SINESIO*, at *Turin*, ſecretary to the Cardinal, would write very well in verſe could he apply himſelf wholly to it. The ſame might be ſaid of the Count *de Lavriano*, and ſome other young people: but the worſt is, this is not the country for making verſes.

AT *Placentia* there is one *Alexander Graziòli*, of *Bologna*, who underſtands the *Tuſcan* language perfectly: but his ſtyle is ſomewhat affected.

I CANNOT recollect any other in all *Italy* worthy to be admitted, I do not ſay among the poets, but, among thoſe who underſtand *Tuſcan* poetry. The many who mutually extol each other for poets, are lame verſifiers, unacquainted with the language: I don't except even the *Florentines* themſelves, none of whom, in our day, can prove himſelf a true and legitimate deſcendant of thoſe illuſtrious writers which their ingenious city produced, at one period.

THE Marquis *Maffei*, already mentioned, Father *Zucchi*, who verſifies extempore, *Beſtelli*, author of the inſipid *Gonella*, and the Abbé *Franta*, with all the reſt of *Verona*, are cried up for great poets by many who have no taſte. For my own part I am certain their poems, already languiſhing, will not outlive their authors.

THE verſes of *Barufuldi*, *Agnelli*, *Borzetti*, and the other poets of *Ferrara*, will likewiſe be buried on the ſame day with thoſe who made them.

PAUL ROLLI, who tranſlated the *Engliſh Milton*, is another poet who does not even underſtand the language, as his very fooliſh notes on *Boccacio* evidently ſhew.

As to all the *Arcadians* of *Rome*, it would be a profanation of poetry to name them.

JOHN

JOHN ANTHONY VULPI, at *Padua*, writes some little things in *Italian*; but it is really pity he should write in any language but *Latin*. All the others of *Padua* are true *Arcadian* poets.

THE famous *Muratori* has also been weak enough to write some verses; and, what is still worse, two books in prose; one intitled *Good Taste*, and the other *Of perfect Poetry*. His verses are wretched, his prose good for little, and the subject very ill handled.

THE same may be said of Father *Quadrio's History of Poetry*. This simple priest must needs prattle about poetry, though he was never capable of writing four good lines.

I shall not mention to you Father *Ceva*, a Carmelite of *Turin*; nor his enemy *Blaze Schiava d'Este*. These, with some of their very ignorant followers on both sides, have poisoned all *Italy* with their books, crammed with folly and impertinences. They disputed about what neither understood, and I believe their quarrel must have lasted till now, had not death snatched away *Ceva* about two years ago. May *Schiavo*, and all the *Italian* pedants and impostors, who serve only to ruin the Booksellers, take warning before they go after him.

I CAN never forbear laughing when I think of a catalogue which somebody at *Rome* gave an *English* Gentleman of my acquaintance, containing, as he pretended, the best writers both in prose and verse, among whom I found *Marini*, Friar *Cyr* of *Pers*, *Achillini*, *Ciampeli*, *Prati*, *Testi*, *Mene*, *Maggi*, and some others of the same stamp. Never, Sir, entertain a thought of reading any of these miserable butchers of poetry;

and make it a general rule, to read only those of the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth century; as to those of the fifteenth, carefully avoid looking into any of them, not even those who wrote in the end of that century; such as *Salvini*, *Fagivoli*, *Zappi*, and such like: for though *Salvini* was a man of considerable learning, his style is poor, and his thoughts betray the pedant.

FAGIVOLI is a barren buffoon, who in his burlesque poems strains hard to make you laugh; but for the most part without success: it is only in his comedies that you meet with a country character perhaps well done. But for *Zappi*, he is a most wretched poet, and has neither invention, sentiment, nor language; in short, a true *Arcadian* shepherd.

REDI and *Magalotti* alone have wrote tolerably well in prose: but they are both indifferent poets.

CAREFULLY avoid some volumes printed under the title of *Poems by the Arcadians of Rome*. Shun them, Sir, as you would do the plague. They are the productions of those *Arcadians* just mentioned.

HAVING given you a general idea of our poetry and language, it remains that I should say something of the pronunciation. There is a common proverb by which they pretend to teach the true manner of pronouncing our language. *Lingua Toscana in bocca Romana*. Some people are persuaded it is true according to the letter: the language, they say, ought to be *Tuscan*, but the pronunciation that of *Romagna*. The people of *Sienna*, nevertheless, tell us, theirs is the best, and many foreigners are of the same opinion. But the *Florentines* smile at both; they say that

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the language (which many of them, and not without reaſon, would have to be called *Florentine*, and not *Tuſcan* or *Roman*) ought to be pronounced as the polite and well-bred people of their city ſpeak it. I, for my part, who am neither of *Florence*, *Sienna*, nor *Romagna*, but of a province in *Italy* whoſe accent differs greatly from all the three, think this article of the pronunciation, is a thing not worth contending about. The point of greateſt importance is, to attain to write the language well; and afterwards to learn to ſpeak it with that accent which is moſt agreeable to the ear of the perſon who ſtudies it. I frankly own, I like only the *Florentine* accent. The others have ſomething ſo effeminate and languid, they tire me as much as to hear a *few* ſpeak. But, after all, I repeat it again, every one has his peculiar ear, which he ought to conſult more than the opinion of others.

From this ſuccinct diſcourſe, too ſuccinct, indeed, for the great number of things to be treated of, had I undertaken to handle the ſubject in detail, you may ſee that it is my opinion the fine language of *Tuſcany* is fallen from what it was, and that it is at preſent on the decline. And when I conſider how few in our time endeavour to cultivate it, I conjecture that it will ſoon be intirely changed, and in a little time be wholly loſt, unleſs ſome *Italian* prince ſhould ariſe to declare himſelf its patron, and undertake to make it flouriſh again: which can ſcarcely happen whilſt things remain on their preſent footing. What makes the caſe ſtill worſe is: the Gentlemen of *Florence* at this day, for example *Lami*, *Gori*, *Buontalmanti*, *Bonduci*, &c. who ought, above all other to apply themſelves to its cultivation

vation, and might do it with leaſt trouble, are preciſely thoſe who precipitate its ruin, by employing a number of *Gallicisms*, which have nothing to do with our language.

I SHALL conclude theſe remarks with the following reflexion: Moſt of the *Italians* are very excuſable for not ſtudying and cultivating their language at preſent, when there is no longer any Prince in *Italy*, who is a lover or patron of learned men and poets, nor among the Nobles and rich men one who regards learning or the fine arts; but every one, great and ſmall, openly deſpiſes poetry, and treats thoſe who ſtudy it or polite literature as fools or madmen. We may therefore look on it as a kind of miracle, to find in *Italy*, thus declining, any tolerable writer, much leſs a good one; and if ſuch ſhould be found, men of ſenſe cannot too much praiſe and applaud his courage, ſince to become ſuch, he muſt have laboured and fatigued himſelf without hope of recompence, and ſtill leſs of reputation, and muſt have ſupported, with the greateſt intrepidity, the general contempt, and the ſilly malevolent criticiſms of eminent blockheads.

FINIS.